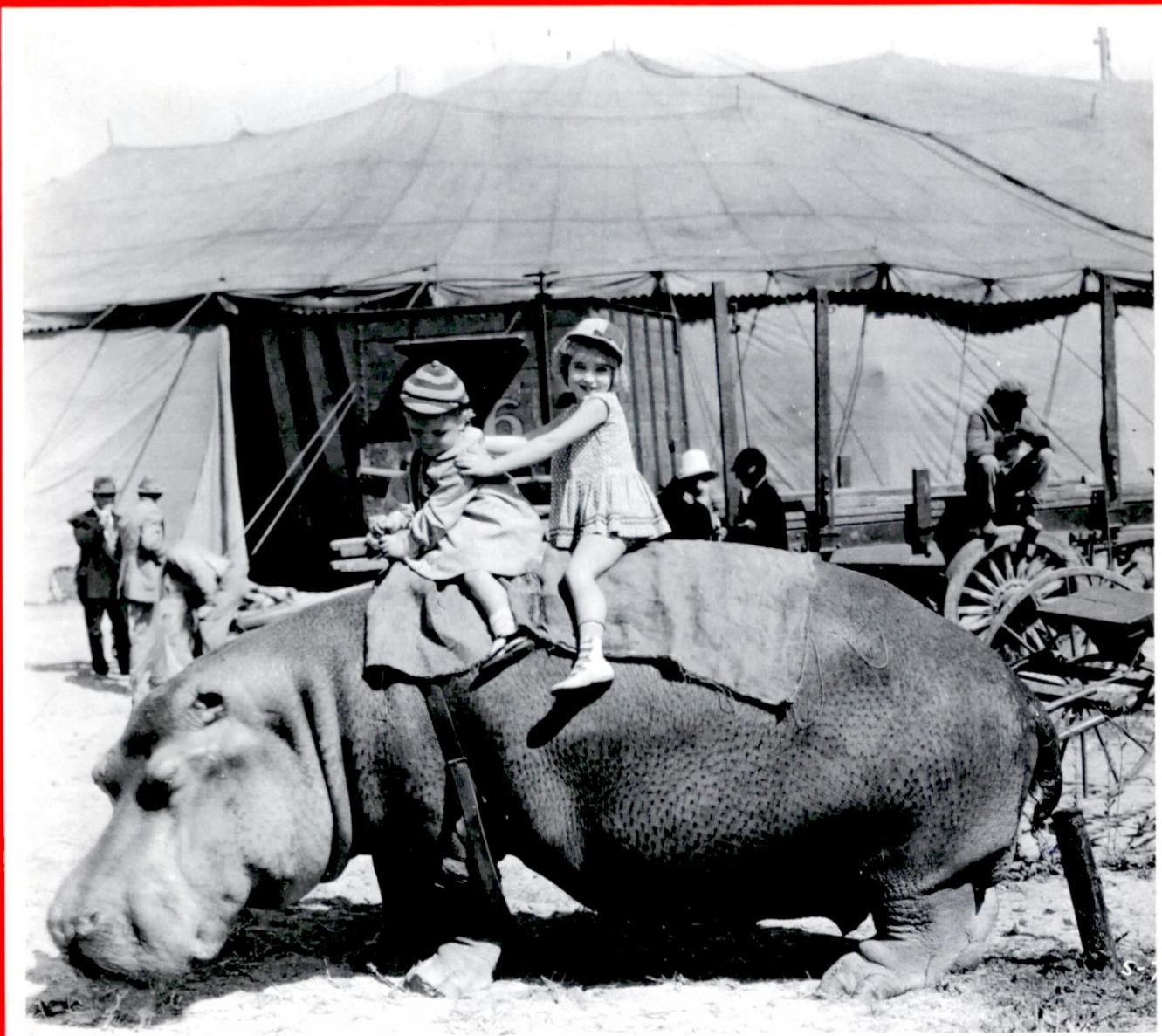


Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF
THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1994



BANDWAGON

The Journal of the
Circus Historical Society

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

The cover photo was taken by Harry Atwell on the Sells-Floto Circus in 1929. The hippo Tambon was bought by that show in 1910. Tambon remained with the Floto show when it was sold to the American Circus Corporation. The animal died in the Peru, Indiana winter quarters in 1933.

In 1935 the Erie Lithographing Co. used the photo as a design for a Cole Bros. Circus poster that was used by that show through 1945. The photo and the poster are from the Pfening Archives.



NEW DIRECTORY

A 1994 directory of the CHS membership is now available. It contains all current members names, membership number and address.

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Respectfully submitted,		
Stuart Thayer, January 25, 1994		

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THE CIRCUS YEAR IN REVIEW

1993 SEASON



BY FRED D. PFENNING III

Overall, it was a good year for the circus business. While the steadily improving economy was probably the main factor behind this sanguine state of affairs, the industry received a big boost from the festivities surrounding the 200th anniversary of the first circus in America. The mainstream press generated numerous articles on the commemoration, some cities celebrated the event, and many shows incorporated the theme into their performances. The anniversary's high point occurred on April 6 when the post office issued four circus stamps at the Smithsonian Institution's new National Postal Museum in Washington. The first day of issue speakers included Kenneth Feld, president of Ringling-Barnum, and Greg Parkinson, director of the Circus World Museum. King Tusk, Ringling-Barnum's giant tusked elephant, cancelled the first stamp, surrounded by wagons from the Baraboo museum. While the stamps themselves—depicting a female aerialist, a ringmaster, a clown and an elephant—were criticized for their modernistic artwork, they nevertheless helped legitimized the circus as an American institution, and made millions more circus conscious.

The seemingly endless assault from animal rights fanatics continued on many fronts. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed regulations limiting the exhibition of exotic animals on circuses. The California Assembly considered legislation to prohibit chaining elephants for more than two hours a day in permanent facilities. Circuses were routinely picketed by animal rights groups, particularly in the East where disturbing signs of a hostile press surfaced. A New England newspaper, for

example, used the headline "Circus Draws Attacks as it Tours Area" when a tenter entered its locale. One show had to blow a Long Island date after the town board denied it a license after pressure from animal rightists.

There were, however, a few hopeful signs. A court of appeals in Toronto struck down a law passed in 1992 by the Toronto city council which prevented circuses playing the city from using exotic animals. Suit was brought by the Toronto Sky Dome, Garden Bros. Circus, and Ringling-Barnum. Circus fans became more aggressive in countering the animal welfarists. They organized a letter writing campaign to protest the Fish and Wildlife proposals, and in at least one instance passed out pro-circus brochures in opposition to the animal lovers' leaflets.

Other problems vexed the industry. Criticism of the practice of phone promotion, the selling of circus tickets over the telephone, persisted as a few shows generated bad press on this issue. The safety of circus seating was in the news, especially after a bleacher collapse in

Carson and Barnes elephant Barbara pulling stakes while manager Geary Byrd, in left front, looks on at Franklin, Indiana on September 11. Bill Rhodes photo.



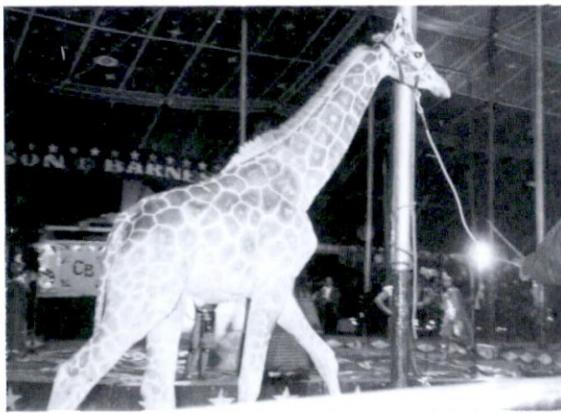
Massive big top of the Carson and Barnes Circus in California in May. Jerry Cash photo.

the spring. The Noahesque Midwestern floods in the spring and early summer, and the March blizzard in the East upset schedules, hurt the box office and generally played havoc with a number of organizations.

In spite of problems, some companies reported record or near record grosses. A few new shows took to the road, and only a single big one failed. The trend toward better lighting, costumes and greater emphasis on the theatrical aspects of the performance continued. One show even tinkered with the sacrosanct size of the ring, creating one huge elliptical barrier for part of its presentation. Traditionalists bemoaned the increased use of computerized music systems as live bands maintained their decline.

The outdoor branch of the business, tented and otherwise, while no longer the dominant format, was still a highly visible and viable means of exhibition. With some notable exceptions the tenters were a small town and suburban phenomenon as metropolises generally saw their circuses indoors. The big top continued to hold a strong grip on the American psyche, so much so that tents and circuses were still linked together by the general public even though many if not most people had not seen a show under a pavilion in years.

The Carson and Barnes Circus, headed by D. R. Miller and his family, opened in Paris, Texas on March 20, and, taking Horace Greeley's advice, soon headed west, reaching California on April 18. After a fifty-six day sojourn in that state, it moved into Oregon, Washington and the Big Sky states before reaching the upper Midwest



Carson and Barnes giraffe in the walk-around at Kennesaw, Georgia on October 25. Animal was new to show in 1993. Richard J. Reynolds photo.

in late July. The trek back to its winter lair in Hugo, Oklahoma began in early October through the deep South before closing up shop at Vivian, Louisiana on November 14. By all accounts, the overall box office was excellent.

This marvel of efficiency was the last of the giant one night stand aggregations which were once as plentiful as drive-in theaters. Only eight two day stands were made, the remainder being one dayers. The odometers registered a hair under 15,000 miles during the tour with about 64 miles being added each day on average. Forty-two show-owned vehicles moved the company.

The five ring performance appeared under a 120 foot round top tent with five 40 foot and two 15 foot middle sections. The presentation was similar to the previous year's with Luciana Loyal, bareback rider; the Flying Cavallinis and the Flying Ramirez; Donnie Carr with the elephants; William Bradley Jewell with the cats; and two wheels of death. Ross Raborn was the ringmaster.

A liberty act with six Friesian stallions

Beatty-Cole ticket semi at Deland, Florida opening in late March. Jerry Cash photo.



was a notable addition to the performance. Emigrating from the Netherlands, they joined the show at McMinnville, Oregon on June 19, and started earning their keep at Port Orchard, Washington a few days later.

The menagerie, a glorious throwback to the great traveling zoos circuses carried early in the century, included twenty-one elephants, a hippo, a rhino, a giraffe, camels, a llama, a guanaco, and other species. The rhino and hippo were new to the

show, the ones from the previous season being traded in for newer models. Amy, one of the show's elephants, spent the year at John Cuneo's compound in Grayslake, Illinois for breeding purposes. Unfortunately, the calf was stillborn on December 7.

The Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus, the other big touring tenter, started in its home town of Deland, Florida on March 25. Playing its traditional route, the show moved up the Atlantic seaboard, reaching Maryland on May 12. The rest of the spring and summer were spent in New York, the mid-Atlantic states, and New England before heading back home through the deep South. The tour's finale was at Palm Beach Gardens, Florida on November 21.

Traveling on 27 show-owned steering wheels, the tires covered a little over 10,000 miles during the season. This was a two night stand circus; it had 54 of them, most of the rest being three to seven days in length. Only nine one day engagements were played. Co-owner John Pugh had back surgery soon after the season began. Doug Holwadel, the other owner, and the new general manager Royce Voight took up the slack until his return in July.

The show was cleared of any wrong doing after a drunk was killed when he jumped a fence to pet one of the elephants in Fishkill, New York on June 5. Danbury, Connecticut, home of circus pioneer Aaron Turner, was a red one on June 9-11 with all six performances needing straw; a seventh show could have also sold out. Cultural Diversity Update: When the company appeared on the parking lot of Flushing, New York's Shea Stadium in late July, it ran ads in Chinese language newspapers

and had a Chinese interpreter translate the announcing and the coloring book pitch.

Beatty-Cole bought a new big top from Anchor, a 144 foot round with three 45 foot center pieces. Under it appeared a strong performance which included Khris Allen with the Marcan tigers, Venko Lillov's bears, the Quiros on the high wire, the Flying Rodriguez, Dawnita and Bonnie Bale with liberty horses, Fred Logan with the elephants, and Sean Thomas in Elvin Bale's cannon. James Haverstrom led an eight piece band, and Jimmy James was ringmaster. Eight clowns provided the mirth.

An innovation was the self-described Contiguous Etruscan CircuspHERE in which the ring curbs were rearranged



Banner at New York City's Lincoln Center advertising Big Apple's winter production, "Carnevale in Venice." Paul Guteil photo.

into an eclipse covering the entire arena for the second half of the performance, thus making one large "ring" instead of the usual three smaller ones. It allowed acts to break out of the confines of the standard ring. Logan's ten elephants, for example, were able to work as one unit for the first time, thereby giving the audience a different sense of the bulls' massiveness.

The Big Apple Circus, the tented one ring miracle from the heart of Manhattan, started troup ing in Brooklyn in late March. A month long engagement in Boston followed before a series of May and June dates in the New York City area. The big jump to Columbus was next, after which it headed back East before the summer tour's swan song at Shelburne, Vermont on August 1. The winter season began with about twenty days near Washington, D. C., followed by the great,



New Circus Vargas European style big top at Hollywood Park, California on June 20. Jerry Cash photo.

glorious run in New York City's Lincoln Center from October 21 until January 9, 1994.

The spring and summer performance was a reprise of the 1992 winter offering. Entitled "Goin' Places," it featured three generations of the Schumann family in the ring as father Max joined daughter Katja and granddaughter Katherine Schumann Binder in a dressage number. Other actors included Johnny Peers with his dogs, the Egorov troupe in a casting act, Vladimir Tsarkov in a combination juggling-contortion routine, and Buckles Woodcock with the elephants.

"Carnevale in Venice," the new production, maintained the exacting standards of previous editions as the lighting, pacing, music, costumes and mix of acts were all a cut above the rest of the business. Among the features were the Collins brothers in a comedy trapeze turn, clowns Ramano and Alfredo Colombo, the Shenyang acrobatic troupe in an aerial routine, Katja and Max Schumann with liberty horses, juggler Serge Percelly, and Ben and Darlene Williams with the Woodcock elephants. Linda Hudes, the Karl King of the 1990s, composed much of the show's music. Founder Paul Binder was ringmaster and Rik Albani led the first rate band.

The company, a not for profit corporation, received a Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for \$235,000. The ten days the show appeared in Columbus was that town's record for a tented circus. While business was off, evidence of why no previous circus had played there that long, two highlights of the stand were visits by Gunther Gebel-Williams and Smokey Jones.

Circus Vargas, headed by Roland Kaiser and Joe Muscarello, opened in Arizona in early February and soon headed to its traditional stomping grounds in California where it spent almost the entire season making multiple day stands before ending the year at Oxnard on November 21. It was the first time in years the show

didn't go into the Midwest. The season was financially tough. Before mid-season the title "Vargas" was painted over on virtually every piece of equipment.

The show utilized a new European style big top and a new seating system with plastic seats. The one ring performance de-emphasized animal acts; indeed, Kay Rosaire with her cats, and Col. Joe the elephant were the only routines with animals. The rest of bulls, with the exception of two ride elephants, were farmed out to other showmen with Rex Williams and Chip Arthur each having a herd. A highlight of the performance was Rebecca Perez in a sensational single trapeze turn. Other acts included the Ramos troupe on the perch pole, the Flying Rodogels, and Manfried Friesch in a comedy bungee routine. NAFTA update: Col. Joe was exported to Mexico City at year's end to work the Circo Atayde Hnos. Christmas engagement which ran until February 6, 1994.

Jeanette Williams working liberty horses at Circus Williams Althoff's opener for the Circus Hall of Fame in Peru, Indiana in late June. Sheelagh Jones photo.



Allan C. Hill's Great American Circus on the lot at Naples, Florida on January 7 during its winter mini-tour of the state. Joe Bradbury photo.

Cirque du Soleil, the Montreal based new waver, had its tent up almost the entire year. Starting in Costa Mesa, California in late January, it made what must have been the longest jump in North American field show history when it transversed the continent for its next stand in New York City. Afterwards it appeared in Toronto, Chicago, Boston and Washington before closing in Atlanta in late December.

With the production values and ticket prices of a Times Square musical, the show drew its audience from up scale adults rather than blue collar kids. Entitled "Saltimbanco," which loosely translated to "street performer," the production included contortion, trapeze, the Russian swing, tight rope walking, hand balancing, clowning—and no animals—all accompanied by New Age music, costumes and lighting. The overall effect was a weird melding of Sarasota and Broadway that baffled traditionalists but appealed to yuppies who wouldn't attend Carson and Barnes if it fell on them.

Soleil's second unit spent the year at Steve Wynn's Mirage Casino in Las Vegas. Entitled "The Nouvelle Experience," the show appeared in a tent behind the hotel. It featured typical Soleil fare such as slack wire walking, hand balancing and the like.

Circus Williams Althoff had a ruinous year. After a series of Florida dates starting in early March, some of them for fairs, trouble hit at Brook Park, Ohio, near Cleveland, on April 3, when 47 people were injured when a portion of the show's seating collapsed. The company regrouped, and worked dates in the Midwest in May and June.

The other shoe dropped in early July, about three weeks after starting a string of dates for Peru, Indiana's Circus Hall of Fame, when the show abruptly closed. It deserved better. Jeanette Williams, the sole owner of the circus after severing her partnership with Jacki Althoff in Feb-

ruary, had excellent equipment and a first class performance. Early in 1994 the show sought protection under chapter 7 of the Bankruptcy Code.

The ill-fated Hall of Fame run was under a one ring Cannobio top seating 2500. The in-ring talent included the Williams-Loyal riders featuring Timi Loyal, Phil and Francine Schacht with Dondi the elephant, Lilli-Ana Kristensen with a cage act, Caroline Williams with a big and little horse routine, and Men in Design, a hand balancing team. John Wilson was ringmaster; Leigh Ketchum led a three piece band; and Dusty Sadler was the clown.

The Great American Circus frolicked in Florida from January 6 to February 4 before starting the regular season on February 26 in that state. After playing the deep South early in the tour the show went into the Midwest in the spring, appearing in Iowa and Minnesota for the first time. Much of the summer was spent in the mid-Atlantic and New England regions before heading back home to Florida where the itinerary ended on November 6.

The show had a new big top, an 80 foot round with one 40 foot and two 30 foot middles from A-1 Tent in Sarasota, Florida. The midway had a concession stand, pony sweep, elephant ride, moon bounce, and a petting zoo with goats and sheep. Everything moved behind nine show-owned trucks.

Brian La Palme was the announcer, introducing, among others, Lou Rossell with her leopard act, Donna Moos in a cloud swing, Jorge Rossell with his comedy car, and David Hazlett with two African elephants. At the regular season's opener in late February, owner Allan Hill's twelve year old daughter Heather debuted on the single trapeze with her proud father as under stander. The younger Hill had been trained by trapeze legend La Norma Fox.

David Rawls, Kelly Miller manager (r.) checks Nina for missing tooth. One was found in the truck that morning and the show was trying to determine which elephant dropped it. Bill Rhodes photo.

The show was haunted by the February 1992 incident in which an elephant went berserk and was subsequently put down as animal rights activists and anti-circus journalists, particularly in the East, kept raising the issue. Difficulties with state inspectors in New England, and legal problems arising from phone solicitation also vexed the company. After the season, the circus sold its elephants to Gopher Davenport, a signal that the tour did not meet financial expectations. On a happier note, Hill was honored by the Ringling Museum of the Circus in February.

The Kelly Miller Circus started in its home town of Hugo, Oklahoma on March 20. It immediately went into Texas, then headed east, and eventually north, reaching the Ohio by way of Dixie on May 11. After dates in West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Ohio again, almost all of July was spent in Michigan. It then moved to Ontario for a little over four weeks. Returning to the States on September 2, it played the Midwest, Border, and Plains states before heading for the barn on the last day of October.

This one had a new Scola Teloni tent. Actors included James "Dutch" Crawford with six liberty horses, Ron and Chris Pace in perch pole and aerial cradle routines, Wolfgang Bruno with the elephants, Marie France with ten Yorkies, and Greg Hefner and Kim Wong in a cradle act. William Rawls, brother of manager David Rawls, was ringmaster. Marshall Eckelman led a three piece band.

Roberts Bros. Circus began romping in Florida in late March. By early May it was in the mid-Atlantic states, and after an early summer swing through Ohio, proceeded to New England for an extensive tour. The season ended in Florida in late October. Owned and managed by Doris Earl and her family, the company celebrated its twentieth season.



Entrance to Roberts Bros. Circus in Maine during the summer. Fred Campbell photo.

The performance was similar to the previous year's with Yvonne Stephens with pot bellied pigs, Heidi Casady on Roman rings, Curt and Heidi Casady on trapeze, and Ken "Turtle" Benson with a whip cracking routine and the elephant Lisa who was leased from D. R. Miller. Bill Schreiber was the ringmaster and presented liberty ponies. Like a number of its competitors, the company invested in a new big top. The approximately sixty employees of the troupe moved on eight show-owned vehicles and about a dozen privately owned ones.

Franzen Brothers Circus initiated things in Florida in early April and closed there in mid-November. In between, it ginned out the South, Midwest, and East. Its midway was typical of small tenters: a pony sweep, petting zoo, elephant ride, and a concession trailer.

Owner Wayne Franzen, one of the hardest workers in the business, had an eight tiger act, and a liberty pony routine in the performance. Others aren't displays included Casey Cainen with a rola bola turn, juggling, and a camel and llama display; the Ayala sisters in a double trapeze exhibition; and Brian Franzen with three elephants, an Asian and two Africans. Eric James was ringmaster and

Concession trailer of Culpepper and Merriweather Circus in California in April. Jerry Cash photo.



performed an illusion act. The two and a quarter hour presentation was accompanied by a two piece live band, something of a rarity anymore.

The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus opened its ticket wagon on March 7 in Arizona, playing that state and California through May 20 when the aggregation headed into Oregon, Washington, and the Big Sky states. In late June it made a three day jump, an oddity, from Wyoming to Illinois as a prelude to a run in the Chicago area. Other Midwestern engagements followed before heading to the Southwest with the tent being taken down for the last time in Payson, Arizona on October 16.

Managed by Red Johnson, this one traveled on seven show-owned steering wheels. Spring rains in the West created problems, and later the tent blew down in the Wisconsin wind. The midway had a moon bounce, elephant ride, pony sweep, petting zoo, and combined ticket wagon and concession trailer. The show was one of the host circuses to April's Circus Fans Association convention in Los Angeles, and in July appeared for Delavan, Wisconsin's annual Circus Days festival.

Among the kinkers were Heidi Wendumy who worked dogs, and her dressage horse Excalibur; Ken Taylor on single trapeze, the upside down loop walk, and in a fire eating routine; the Kiss family in their excellent hand balancing turn; Terrell Jacobs III with a mule and dog, and with liberty ponies; Lynn Jacobs on the Spanish web; and James Zaichek with Barbara the elephant. Dean Gerard was ringmaster.

The King Royal Circus concluded a tour of Hawaii in January. Back on the mainland, the show was in the West in the spring before sailing from Bellingham Washington for Alaska on July 4 where the show appeared for about a month. Dates in the Mountain, Plains, and Southwest states followed, the company going as far east as Arkansas and Missouri. It went into quarters after playing Dublin, Texas on November 15. Owner John "Gopher" Davenport split the show in Alaska, calling the second unit Ford Bros., and did the same thing late in the season, this time calling the second offering the R.J. King Circus.

The show had a new tent, an 80 foot round top with two 30 foot and one 40 foot middle sections. Under it appeared the juggling Null sisters, trick rope and whip cracker Tex Hill, and single trapeze artiste Gee Gee Davenport. Bela Tabak worked a mixed act with birds, a skunk, a pig, a

monkey, a dog, and cats. He also presented his unique peacock routine, llamas at liberty, and a camel and horse number. Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Don Johnson elephants joined the show in time for the Alaskan trek. Gibbs also was the ringmaster, which must have been like watching Van Gogh paint.

King Royal had an impressive animal inventory which included five elephants, a giraffe, a dozen llamas, ten peacocks, a leopard, five tigers, three lions, twenty snakes, fourteen ponies, two zebras, a reindeer, assorted goats, sheep and pot bellied pigs, and one horse. When the troupe played Dillon, Montana on August 27, Gibbs and the five elephants laid a wreath on the grave of Pitt, a Cole Bros. elephant who died after being struck by lightning, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the tragedy.

Bentley Bros. Circus, owned by Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancey, had four tours in 1993. The first was a group of under canvas dates in Florida for most of February and March. The second perambulation, a three ring, open air extravaganza, ran from early April to mid-June in New Mexico, California and Arizona. The summer grandstand tour went from late June to mid-September in the Midwest, East, and upper South. The year concluded with a Christmas march in the East. The core spring and summer dates were often sponsored by police and fire fighter groups.

Actors with the summer edition were Bruno Blaszak with his cats; the Hall family on unicycles; Golda Ashton and her daughters on rolling globes; George Allen on single trapeze; Diane Moyer with horses, dogs, and elephants; the Posso family on the high wire; Jim and Tepa Hall with bears and the Flying Gaonas. Wally

One of Allen Bros. new seat wagons at Owenton, Kentucky on April 25. Bill Rhodes photo.



New tent and marquee of Vidbel's Olde Tyme Circus at Maplewood, New Jersey on the 4th of July. Paul Gutheil photo.

Naughtin was show manager and Jim Miller led the band.

The winter show, an indoor presentation called the Mark Charles Holiday Revue, had the Hansen family in their roller skating routine, juggler Shane Hansen, the Diane Wilson seals, Dana Allen with birds, the Fabulous Darnells with illusions, and variety performer Sonny Fontana whose act consisted of hand shadows of animals and celebrities.

Allen Bros. Circus debuted in the Lone Star State in early March, camping through the South and the Midwest in the spring. Summer found the troupe in the Midwest and East before returning to Texas where the generators were shut off for the last time on November 13.

Under the big top appeared Ron and Robin Dykes in a cradle act, on unicycles, and in a slack wire routine; Scott Taylor with snakes; and Joseph Browowitz with the cats and elephants. Earlynn Bedford, wife of owner Allen Bedford, occasionally worked the cat act. As was commonplace, ringmaster Phil Chandler also performed illusions.

Moving on eleven show-owned vehicles, the troupe expanded its route, invading New York state for the first time. New equipment included a pavilion from Sarasota's A-I Tent, which was approximately 90 feet by 130 feet, and four

seat wagons. The midway had a pony ride, petting zoo, moon bounce, and concession trailer. Overall the year was good at the box office, although spring rains in the Midwest caused problems.

Vidbel's Olde Tyme Circus opened in late April and closed in early October after wandering through nine mid-Atlantic states and New England. At the Somers, New York premier the show par-



Walker Bros. Circus on lot in Sugar Creek, Ohio. Norman Vodrey photo.

ticipated in a parade which passed the venerable Elephant Hotel, built by menagerie pioneer Hackaliah Bailey.

This one ring tenter had a strong performance that included Jeanette Rix with her bears, Jennifer Vidbel with liberty ponies, Susan Vidbel with a bird act, Tracy Bannister in an aerial routine, Bill Bannister with his dogs, and the Jorge Barreda elephants. Billy Martin was ringmaster. When Barreda was late for the opener because of problems with his semi, Billy Commerford filled in with an African bull named Karen. The troupe, headed by Al and Joyce Vidbel, moved on five trucks.

Reid Bros. Circus fulfilled its usual Spring route. After starting in Oregon in late April it transferred to the Mountain and Plains states before the finale in Minnesota in late June. The fall Texas dates ran from mid-September to early October. Appearing under auspices for police organizations, this one used both tents and grandstands as venues. Among the actors on the spring dates were Wilson Barnes with the Don Johnson tigers, Adolpho Ponce on the low wire, Eddie Steeples with his chimps, Tahar with his alligators, the Flying Rameriz, and Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Don Johnson elephants. Bobby Gibbs doubled as ringmaster. The Texas line-up was similar, although Doug Terranova with his elephant Kamba and ringmaster John Fugate substituted for the Gibbuses.

Circus Flora, the St. Louis based new waver, played its home town in the spring and the fall, and late in the year appeared in Sacramento and Scottsdale, Arizona, closing in the latter town on January 2, 1994. Headed by David Balding, the tenter continued the saga of the Baldini family's adventures in 19th century America. This year's installment was entitled "California: The Journey's End" with a performance that went back and forth between the story line and traditional sawdust routines. Highlights of the always intriguing presentation included a big eighteen person riding act with seven horses, heading by James Zoppe; the Fly-



Phills Bros. Circus on lot during the summer. Paul Gutheil photo.



Elvis impersonator Don Clement on Col. Mel's Old West Circus in Georgia in October. Ray Gronso photo.

ing Wallendas; aerialist Sacha Pavlata; clown Larry Pinsoni; and Flora the elephant.

The company conducted a summer day camp teaching circus skills in St. Louis in June and July. A non-profit corporation, it received a National Endowment for the Arts matching grant for \$50,000. The show had a tough year as ticket sales in St. Louis were down, and the big top was severely damaged in a storm.

Walker Bros. Circus, headed by Johnny Walker, toured from March through September in the South, Midwest and East. Appearing under the 1500 seat big top were the Dunderdales in a three person rola bola routine, a knock-about comedy number, and a juggling act; Mike Rice with Pulsar, a dressage horse; Gayle and Franklyn Murray with two Asiatic elephants; and Catia Meluzzi on web. Dick Johnson was

the ringmaster and performed magic, and Ian Charles was the clown. The music was recorded.

Phills Bros. Circus romped through the East for twenty weeks starting in late May. The Valencias family put on much of the show: William did a musical clown turn, Enrico rola bolaed, Dulia and Margaret exhibited birds, Margaret presented a solo poodle act, Lynn worked a single trapeze routine, and the whole clan trampolined. In addition, Tom Demry worked snakes, ate fire, and presented Anna Louise the elephant. Owned by Bill and Martha Phillips, the one ringer had a blow down in Union Beach, New Jersey.

Col. Mel's Old West Circus, a new entry, hurrahed for most of October in four southern states. Owned by Pat Guthrie and Jeff McPherson, the outfit was side walled, using the old Toby Tyler Circus seat wagons which were covered by canvas, giving the lay-out the feeling of a micro-wild west show. Ringmaster Bobby Fairchild doubled in brass by doing an illusion routine and a whip cracking act. Also on the bill were Myrna Ratcliff with her dogs, and clown Lucky Crabbs. Shades of Tiny Tim Department: Show's

The Great Wallenda Circus at its first tented engagement in Sarasota, Florida at the first of the year. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.





The Alain Zerbini Circus was new in 1993. Tent and ubiquitous moon bounce shown on a New Jersey lot. Paul Gutheil photo.

headliner was Don Clement, an Elvis Presley imitator, who was apparently quite good. Veteran Jack Gobble was manager.

The Great Wallenda Circus entered the exalted ranks of tenters on the first day of 1993 when it appeared at a Sarasota RV park under a top acquired from Bentley Bros. Other tented dates followed, as did a number of indoor engagements for Shrines, Grottos, and police groups. This one worked mostly in the Midwest and South, mainly in the spring and fall. At the Cleveland Grotto in April the arena features were Baron Julius Von Uhl with his cats, Rietta Wallenda in an aerial routine, the Murillo troupe on the teeterboard, the Zamperla troupe on unicycles, Happy Davis with his comedy car, juggler Justino Zoppe, Davide Zoppe with his Rhesus monkeys, Susan Sherrill's Afghans, and the Great Wallendas on the high wire. Show owners Enrico and Debbie Wallenda spent much of the summer performing at Sea World in Aurora, Ohio.

The Royal Lichtenstein Circus, founded by Jesuit Priest Nick Weber, was a side walled outreach effort by the Catholic

Young tumblers on side walled L. A. Circus during CFA convention in Los Angeles in April. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.



Church. While this single ringer doubtless had an extensive route and one hopes a pleasant season, it garnered hardly any coverage in the trade and fan press. What little there was said that the first tour started on January 10 in Florida and ran until March. It later reopened, playing inner city Baltimore, campgrounds in Vir-

ginia and doubtless elsewhere. In a rarity, Circo Vasquez, a Mexican troupe, crossed the border into Texas for three dates, each running three days to a week. The show moved on ten trucks and carried three elephants.

The Alain Zerbini Circus inaugurated its maiden season with an under canvas show, called Circus in the Sand, at a Maryland amusement park during the summer. The two ring, forty minute show featured Betty Naud with the Lancelot Link Chimps, Joanne Wilson with Suzy the elephant and poodles, and owner Alain Zerbini in a sword balancing routine. Ringmaster John Frazier also did a rope spinning act.

In mid-September the troupe went on the road, playing the mid-Atlantic states for about two weeks. Frazier was road manager, and the Wilson sisters presented most of the acts. It moved on a single show-owned truck and used a 70 foot round top tent with two 30 foot middle sections.

The L. A. Circus was a non-profit side walled company which had a number of intermittent dates in and around its namesake city. Founded by Wini McKay,

Dick Monday, and Doug Lyon, this outfit performed in downtown Los Angeles for the Circus Fans Association convention in April. In early October it exhibited for a hospital in the San Fernando Valley where the actors included clowns Dick Monday and Jeff Hess, foot juggler Chester Cable, jug-

bler Dario Vazquez, websters Darlene Williams and Lynn Polke, the acrobatic Vita family, and Gary and Kari Johnson with their elephant Tai. David Burnham was ringmaster, and Bill Payne was bandmaster.

Rudy Bros. Circus had a string of grandstand dates in the Midwest in June. After the show had a larry in Franklin, Pennsylvania on June 3-4, it blew a stand in Mercer, Pennsylvania. Eaton, Ohio was next, followed by an open air date for a synagogue in Detroit. Beefs resulted from the Detroit engagement as the sponsor didn't pay off, which led to blowing at least two subsequent dates, after which the show apparently terminated the season. Among the actors on this death march were clown Middy Streeter, Irvin Hall with his baboons and unicycle routines, Gza Gza and Jeff Bruski with their bird act, and Bobby Cline with his tigers. Eighty-one year old co-owner Rudy Jacobi was ringmaster. Roy and Cindy



Musical comedy number on Rudy Bros. Circus in front of an Eaton, Ohio grandstand on June 8. Al Conover photo.

Wells and some of John Cuneo's elephants augmented the Detroit program.

Circuses which sold their product indoors constituted the largest segment of the market. These aggregations played every sized locale in every part of the continent from New York City, New York's Madison Square Garden to Parts Unknown, Nebraska's grade school gym. These shows, often maligned for not representing "real" circus, became the backbone of the business years ago, and provided more employment than any other type of circusing. So strong was this area's growth that it changed the industry's calendar, making the early months of the year a more active period than the summer months. Unquestionably more people witnessed performances indoors than out, a commentary on both the changing nature of American society, and the ability of show executives to adjust to new conditions.

Always the Greatest Show on Earth, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's 123rd edition, the Red unit, opened for the first time ever in Tampa on New Year's Day. Following the traditional itinerary for the new edition, the show meandered around the South before hitting the metropolitan New York City area early March. It played there through early May at three different venues including Madison Square Garden, the pinnacle of American circusing for over a century. Other engagements in the arena-rich East followed before the annual macro-jump from Philadelphia to Tulsa in mid-June. After another big hop to Tucson and a much shorter one to Phoenix, the troupe played California from early July to mid-September. Western and Midwest stands followed before the closing in Chicago in late November. It was a big time, big city route almost all the way.

Booklet sent to railroads by Ringling-Barnum to familiarize officials about handling of show train.

The performance featured young performers from around the world, including acrobatic numbers by the Chicago Kidz and the Cherprovets Kids from Russia. Other acts included Graham Thomas Chipperfield with his cats, clown David Larible, the Kaganovitch casting act, Steve Boger with his bison, the Lenz chimps, the Lee Stevens chimps, an Espana wheel of death, the Ashton's Risley act, Vivien Larible on the trapeze, and Mark Oliver Gebel with four elephants and four zebras in a mixed liberty routine. The Caroli riders worked a handful of the early stands, then left the show. Eric Michael Gillett was ringmaster, and Keith Greene was band leader.

The train consisted of 52 cars, 33 coaches, 15 flats, and 4 stocks, the most cars since the under canvas days. On March 31 the show paraded in Manhattan using wagons from the Circus World Museum and fourteen of the troupe's eighteen elephants. Ringling-Barnum day and dated Cirque du Soleil in New York City in March and April. Sick call: Graham Chipperfield was hospitalized after being attacked by a lion in Norfolk, Virginia in late February, but was soon back in action. Lee Stevens had back surgery in California during the summer. His wife Judy handled their chimp act after he returned

to their home in Sarasota to recuperate.

The Blue unit started its second tour in West Palm Beach, Florida in late December 1992. Generally playing smaller markets than its sister show, it nevertheless appeared in some big cities such as Baltimore, Washington, Houston, New Orleans, Dallas, St. Louis, Detroit, and Boston before going into the history books at Richfield, Ohio on November 21. As in the past, this unit laid over in Louisville for about two and a half weeks in late spring. It moved on a 49 car train.

The headliners on the Blue show were the Mongolian performers who put on a number of acts including a strong man routine, riding, and contortion. Other numbers included the hand balancing Pivarals, the Fausto Scorpions in a comedy Risley act, the Pantaleenkos on the Russian strap, Wade Burck with tigers, and until his tragic death on May 5, Axel Gautier with eighteen elephants. Gone and Forgotten Department: N/Motion, the rock and roll singers who bombed on the unit's first go-round. Commentators universally agreed the rerouted show, in which the Mongolians were interspersed throughout the performance and the Vargas flying trapeze acts added, strengthened the performance from both a technical and aesthetic point of view.

In other Ringling-Barnum news, a baby elephant was born at the show's Williston, Florida compound on January 10. Entering the world only days after Juliette, another elephantine blessed event, the 227 pound youngster was named, of course, Romeo. In the ultimate in free kids' tickets, the show had a promotion in which any child born in 1993 received a one time pass to the show. In a continuation of the policy instituted on the Blue show in late 1992, the company prohibited vendors from working the seats during the performance on the Red unit and on the ice shows. Owner Kenneth



**RED UNIT
CIRCUS TRAIN
INFORMATION
&
OPERATIONS**

Vargas flying trapeze acts added, strengthened the performance from both a technical and aesthetic point of view.

**ATTENTION
TICKET HOLDERS!**

TODAY
10:30am, 2:30pm, 7:30pm

We apologize for any inconvenience.
Please call (212) 465-MSG1
or [www.ringling.com](#) for ticket refund information.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN.
A Paramount Communications Company

Ringling-Barnum newspaper ad in May 2 *New York Times* announcing postponement of performances due to basketball game. In 1920s, New York's hockey team was obligated to play on the road if its playoff schedule conflicted with Ringling-Barnum's Madison Square Garden dates. Today, the situation is the reverse. Stuart Thayer collection.

Feld was included in *Forbes* magazine's list of the 400 richest Americans, recalling that John Ringling achieved a similar distinction in the 1920s. Feld was later the subject of a feature article in the same periodical.

Clown College moved its campus to the grounds of the Circus World Museum. Chuck Jones, the genius behind the Warner Bros. cartoons, was the commencement

Prop wagons for Ringling-Barnum red unit in Nashville in May. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.



ment speaker and first recipient of the Golden Smile Award at the October 23 graduation. All Out and Over Department: At year's end Ringling-Barnum completely cleared out the Venice, Florida winter quarters. While the show had been gone for almost two years, the transportation and purchasing functions had remained at the location. The property went on the market on January 2, 1994. Always vigilant in protecting its priceless slogan, the show filed a trademark infringement suit against a Yakima, Washington rodeo which termed itself "The Greatest Show on Dirt."

The mid-March blizzard in the East murdered the bottom line as the Blue unit lost five performances in Knoxville. The real killer, however, was the Red unit which lost its week end at New Jersey's Meadowlands and the first day of the engagement at Long Island's Nassau County Coliseum. Both locations had huge advance sales; one report stated that over \$1,200,000 was refunded. The ice shows also lost performances. Nonetheless, by all accounts the year was excellent. Besides the circuses and the ice shows, the organization also produced the Siegfried and Roy illusion extravaganza at the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas; "Fool Moon," a comedic tour de force that rocked Broadway; and a George Lucas show that toured Japan. Feld's achievements would make Barnum proud.

Circuses sponsored by Shrine temples and other fraternal and charitable organizations, especially police and fire fighter groups, were a significant part of the business. Many lamented this style of circusing because the generic title "Shrine

Ringling's Clown College equipment arriving in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Steve Flint photo.



Three great clowns. When Ringling-Barnum was at Madison Square Garden, David Shiner (l.), and Bill Irwin (r.) visited with David Larible. Paul Gutheil photo.

Circus" hindered showmen from developing name recognition in the public's mind, and created the unfortunate situation where many producers competed on price rather than merit in negotiating bookings. Nevertheless, many of these shows were of high quality with first class acts formerly under contract to Ringling-Barnum, Big Apple and major European companies. Many, if not most, performers preferred Shrine dates to tented ones because they generally offered better working and living conditions.

The usual mad scramble for dates occurred as temples sought new producers after beating the old ones down in price so much that they were dissatisfied with the end product, thus continuing a vicious cycle. This destructive dynamic, combined with what appeared to be the inextricable shrinkage in membership of Shrines and other fraternal groups nationwide, was an accident waiting to happen for the circus industry. Producers

were well aware of the problem, and many of them explored the opportunities to work directly with the scores of arenas built in recent years which did not host Ringling-Barnum.

The George Carden Circus International, called Circus Vegas at some dates, was the biggest producer of Shrine circuses with about 460 days of temples bookings. It had

as many as three units on tour simultaneously, one managed by George Carden, another by his father Larry Carden, and a third headed by Dino Medeiros. The Springfield, Missouri based organization did most of its business west of the Mississippi River, although it did have a number of engagements in other regions. Some big city Shrine stands included Milwaukee, Louisville, Denver, Vancouver, Reno, and Portland, the latter under canvas.

When one of the units was in Tyler, Texas in September the performers included Vincent Duke with the cats, Roverta Winn in a slide for life, the Winn aerial motorcycle troupe, the Flying Lunas and Jacqueline Zerbini on the single trapeze. Ringmaster Bill Brickle also presented his poodle act. Kris Kilpatrick worked his cat act earlier in the season. Walter Guerrero injured his shoulder during a mishap in a globe of death act in Lake Charles, Louisiana in March. The Tarzan Zerbini Circus was another major Shrine producer with two units running for much of the year. One opened in Fort Wayne for the Shrine in late January, templing it through April. The other played Tampa's Florida State Fair in February. During the spring and summer one unit toured Canada under canvas while the other appeared at a Montreal amusement park. The season concluded with a series of state side Shrine dates in Minneapolis, Chattanooga, Rockford, and Fort Worth.

At the big Detroit Shrine engagement the program listed Sylvia Zerbini on the

Newspaper ad for George Carden's outdoor date Portage, Wisconsin in June. Fred Dahlinger collection.



Tickets on Sale Now at:
Circus City Creations - Northridge Mall, Portage
Tickets on sale day of shows at Veteran's Memorial Field
The Shrine Circus for benefit of Vacationland Shrine Club. Payments made are not deductible as charitable contributions.



Remarkable seven ring lay out for George Corona's Circus at St. Louis' Busch Stadium for Shrine in June. Jake Conover photo.

trapeze and with liberty horses, Pierre Spenle with the tigers, Dana Allen with the Diane Wilson seals, the Dieklaas sisters on rolling globes, the Flying Rodriguez, and the White Angels. The latter was a high wire act, which included such luminaries as Pedro Carrillo, Sr. and Jr. and Freddy Nock, that recreated the legendary seven person pyramid for the first time before an audience in this country since the Wallendas. The White Angels premiered at Fort Wayne, and regrouped with slightly different personnel at Minneapolis. While they used a net and a mechanic on some tricks, the act was still a stunner.

Talent at the Montreal amusement park during the summer included Freddy Nock on the high wire, Jim Arneberg with his dogs, the Flying Caceres, comedy trampoliner Don Otto, Remo and Jenny Bizzaro in a hand balancing routine, and the MacDougalls in a comedy acrobatic act.

The Royal Hanneford Circus also had two units and lots of Shrine contracts, including big ones in Columbus and Flint. It also worked some fairs, including Springfield, Massachusetts' big Eastern States Exposition, and Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade where the production was called the American Bicentennial Circus.

At the Cincinnati Shrine in March the arenic wonders included the Nerveless Nocks on sway poles, the Hanneford-Suarez riders, Joe and Betty Naud with their chimps, Las Mayas in a living statue act, Ron and Joy Holiday with their uncaged cats, and Carin Cristiani with her elephants. Senor Rai was the ringmaster.

Proprietors Tommy and Struppi Hanneford also produced a circus at Great Escape Amusement Park in Lake George, New York during the summer,

using the Holidays with their cats, Mike LaTorres with

Stoney the elephant, Roberto and Ina Espana with their aerial platform motorcycles, Derrick Roaire with his dogs, and the Langes with their teeterboard, juggling and comedy knockabout routines. Chuck Lisa was ringmaster and Kay Parker directed the band.

Chimp trainer Joe Naud died in Dayton in April while working a pre-show photo session with his orangutan Tootsie. The troupe participated in a parade in Ann

rietta, Georgia, outside Atlanta, in April under a rented big top from Harold Barnes. Talent there included Bruno Blaszak with eight tigers, the Plunkett family on the trampoline, Allen Thompson with five African elephants, the Flying Gaonas, Jeff Plunkett's comedy car, and human cannonball Luis Munoz. Veteran Lucky Larabee was the ringmaster and Rick Percy led the band. The temple also booked about 25 rides from the Deggeller Carnival for the date.

Circus Gatti began marching in Fort Stockton, Texas on February 4 and spent most of its season in the American and Canadian West for Shrine and police groups. At Regina, Saskatchewan in early September the sawdust stars included Lance Ramos with a mixed cage act with three lions, two tigers, two black leopards, and a jaguar; Ari Steeples with his bears; John Pelton with the elephants; the



The Carin Cristiani elephants take a bath during a Royal Hanneford Circus under canvas engagement in Sussex, New Jersey in June. Paul Gutheil photo.

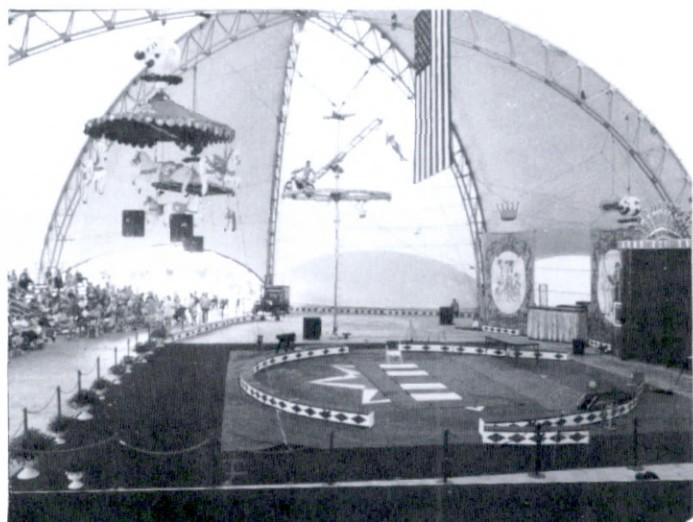
Arbor in late June along with six wagons from Peru's Circus Hall of Fame. It ran wait ads against Carson and Barnes in Gainesville, Georgia in late October. Carson and Barnes responded with their own ads which proclaimed: "This is the big one!" a throw-back to 19th century opposition bill writing.

The George Coronas Circus had a number of Shrine bookings including the long February 26-March 14 Chicago run. The June St. Louis date was held in Busch Stadium where 42,000 reportedly saw one of the performances. The show Shriners in Ma-

Castros on the high wire; J. P. and Doris Theron in a bungee cord trapeze act; and the Flying Lunas.

The Jordan International Circus also started off in February, and exhibited

Royal Hanneford Circus at Great Escape Amusement Park in Lake George, New York during summer. Paul Gutheil photo.



mainly in the western environs of the United States and Canada, although a second unit fulfilled contracts elsewhere on occasion. When it played Salt Lake City for the Shrine in early March the roster listed, among others, Ronnie Carson with a mixed cage act, the Zoppe riders featuring Carla Emerson, Bobby Davis in clown and illusion routines, the Posso's on the high wire, the Flying Valentines, the Jordan globe of death, and Rex Williams with the Vargas elephants. In early December, owner John Jordan produced a circus in Thunder Bay, Ontario for the Canadian Pacific Railroad using Carla Emerson with liberty ponies, comedy trampolinist "Splash" Austin, the foot juggling Francarros, the Bannister family's dogs, and his own globe of death.

International Super Circus had dates from January to November for many different sponsors, mainly in the Midwest. At Youngstown, Ohio in March kinkers included Baron Julius Von Uhl with his lions, James Christopher Plunkett on the slack wire, the Ayak brothers on the trapeze, the Davide Zoppe family with their monkey, dog, and juggling turns, Tino Wallenda on the high wire, the Flying Alvarez, and Lou Ann Jacobs and Jorge Barreda with their elephants. Lucky Larabee introduced the acts, and Bob Furney cued the band.

From November 18th to 21st proprietor George Hubler had a rare unsponsored engagement at Wright State University's Nutter Center in Dayton, Ohio. In spite of animal rights activists posting signs near the box office saying the show was cancelled, the date was successful. Most of Hubler's season was spent in arenas, although he had ten bookings in front of grandstands and seven under canvas. On June 5 he had two units, one in Lewiston, Illinois; the other in Holland, Michigan.

The Hamid Morton Circus, the oldest name in Shrine circus, opened in Hartford in early February and went back to the barn after Virginia Beach, Virginia in late June. In between it appeared in such diverse locales as Topeka, Tulsa, St. Paul, Oklahoma City, and Pittsburgh. At the Hartford debut the program listed Andre Skarbecki with his Serengetti lions, Jay Cochrane on the high wire, Frank and Doris Galambos with their dogs, clown Mike Poteete, juggler Justino Zoppe, Susan Sherrill with her Royal Afghans, the Flying Cortez, Davide Zoppe with his monkeys, and Lou Ann Jacobs with her African elephants.

Garden Bros. Circus, another long time Shrine producer, initiated things in its home town of Toronto in early February

and did Canadian temple dates, and two state side ones, through mid-June. After a lay off, it reopened in Quebec and marched until mid-September. On the first tour the talent included Patricia Zerbini's tigers, Dick Kohlreiser's ponies and dogs, the Ayak brothers in their great trapeze act, the Flying Alvarez, and Chip Arthur with three Vargas elephants. John Kennedy Kane was announcer, and Lee Maloney had the band.

Under the titles Circus Odyssey and Circus America, Ed Migley produced a number of shows for Shrines and other sponsors from February through August in such towns as Buffalo, Cleveland, Providence, Boston, and Syracuse. At the Cleveland Shrine in February the sawdust stars included William Voss with the Cuneo white tigers, the Carrillo brothers on the high wire, D. V. and Dana Allen with the Wilson seals, Carmen Hall with her baboons, the Flying Espanas, the Flying Redpaths, John Welde's bears, and Gary Thomas and Roy Wells with the Hawthorn elephants.

Clyde Bros. Circus played its usual route, starting with the Grand Forks, North Dakota Shrine in April and a string of satellite dates for the Davenport Shrine in June. Among those on the Davenport bill were Faye Alexander with his comedy car, and Doug Terranova with producer Don Johnson's tigers, elephants, and ponies. John Herriott was ringmaster and worked his horse act. Later in the year Clyde Bros. worked about a week in the Dallas area.

Circus Valentine had three runs in Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana from May through October. When the company played Houston on October 9-10 for a



Ed Migley's Circus at South Mountain Arena in West Orange, New Jersey in May. Paul Gutheil photo.

sheriffs' group, the actors included Kris Kilpatrick with the cats, David Connors on the rola bola, juggler Shane Hansen, the Poema family on the teeterboard, Wendy Bell on Roman rings, the Viscontis in a living statue routine, the roller skating Hansen family, clowns Billy Barton

and Bobby Davis, Rex Williams with the Vargas elephants, and the Flying Valentines, headed by show producer Ray Valentine. Peter Sturgis was ringmaster.

Roy Kelroy's Royal Australian Circus worked in New Mexico and Arizona early in the year, in Eastern Kentucky in April, and near Philadelphia in August. When the show played Tucson for the Shrine the program included Paulina Winn in a slide for life, Wilson Barnes with the Don Johnson cats, Los Adriens in a perch pole act, the Don Anderson family with their liberty horses, the Winns' aerial motorcycle, the Bunky Boger family with their buffalo and longhorn steer, the Marble in Motion living statues, the Posso brothers on the high wire, the Flying Rameriz, the Flying Valentines, and Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Don Johnson elephants.

Paul Kaye's Continental Circus produced two dates in Hawaii in August which featured six Russian acts. Among others journeying offshore were Gaylord Maynard with his horse Chief Bearpaw, Susanna Lacey with a Cuneo tiger act, the Flying Valentines, Tahar with his alligators, and Roy Wells and Lynn Polke with five Cuneo elephants. Tommy Baker was ringmaster and Jack Cervone led the band.

In November Kaye provided a power packed show for Evansville, Indiana's Hadi Shrine which billed itself "America's Largest and Greatest Shrine Circus." The line up included Trudy Strong with fifteen Hawthorn tigers, Wendy Plunkett on Roman rings, the Stankeevs in a comedy contortion routine, Jeff Plunkett with his comedy car, Dick Kohlreiser with liberty ponies, Lubov Pisarenko on the trapeze, Pam Rosaire and Roger Zoppe with their chimps, John Welde with his bears, hand balancer Yuri Krasnov, Derrick Rosaire, Sr. with Tony the wonder horse, Jody Jordan's wheel of destiny and wheel of death, the Flying Rodriguez, Bertolina Kazakova and Kikolai Nikolski on the high wire, and fourteen Cuneo elephants.

Plunkett Bros. Circus featured an Aladdin spec which was far more elaborate than most productions of this type at the Omaha Shrine date in April. Also on the bill were Andre Skarbecki with his lions, Dick Kohlreiser with his dogs and ponies, Clint Randall with a breakaway sway pole, the Flying Espanas, John Herriott's big and little equine sensation, and Roy Wells with a five elephant Cuneo act. Russell Darr had a fifteen piece band and the golden throated Herriott was ringmaster.

In mid-July the show was engaged for the remainder of the Circus Hall of Fame

route in Indiana after Circus Williams Althoff closed. After playing a fair in Montana, the troupe headed to Texas and Missouri for a string of dates. A second unit worked the Louisiana State Fair in Shreveport at the same time under an old Kelly Miller big top.

Wayne McCary produced a gaggle of Shrine circuses in New Hampshire and Maine for a month starting April 8. Among those cashing paychecks on this run were Lilli-Ana and Sven Kristensen with their leopard act, the Carrillo brothers on the high wire, the Stankeus family in contortion and hand balancing routines, Jack Cook with his comedy car, John Welde with his bears, the Urias troupe with their globe of death, and Lou Ann Jacobs and Jorge Barreda with their five elephants. Charles Van Buskirk was ringmaster and Fred Petra was musical director.

Circus Hollywood, produced by Serge Coronas, had at least one Florida date in January, and toured Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa and North Carolina in the spring, appearing both in arenas and under canvas. This run employed human cannonball Luis Munoz, the Geraldo family on the high wire, Otto Berosini with his cats, iron jawers Ron and Mitzi Gill, Miss Stevana's poodles, and the Bucky Steele and Bill Morris elephants. Mick Donoho was the singing ringmaster. Bookings in Utah and Iowa, and tented fair dates in Maryland and New York followed.

Hugo Zacchini's Circus Olympia had Shrine bookings in Nashville; Terre Haute, Indiana; and Fort Pierce and West Palm Beach, Florida from March to May. This one neglected to spill much ink in the trade and fan press with the consequence that no accounts appeared of the show beyond the bare bones route.

Circuses were a common sight at fairs and festivals, often as free attractions booked by carnivals or by the fairs themselves. With few exceptions these were small affairs, usually one ringers giving about an hour's worth of entertainment. They exhibited both under canvas and in front of grandstands. While a number of indoor producers played fairs during the slack Shrine months, a few other impresarios specialized in this brand of show business.

The Liebel Family Circus rumbled from January to at least October at Midwestern and Southern fairs. The show also appeared to have had some non-midway dates. The hour long, under canvas presentation was a family affair as owner Tomi Liebel did his one man band, clown, juggling, and educated pony routines;

wife Franchezca worked six liberty ponies, the elephant, and did a trapeze act; and son Tony appeared on the rola bola. Sandor and Elizabeth Raski filled out the bill with a snake act.

The Happytime Circus opened on April 1 and worked through October, mostly in



Davide Zoppe, shown here with wife Susan and son Justino, worked his monkey act for many producers throughout the year. The family also presented dog and juggling acts. Paul Gutheil photo.

California, although an August gig at the Alaska State Fair was on the itinerary. Under an 80 foot by 50 foot big top appeared owner Dave Twomey who was the clown, animal trainer, and ringmaster. A feature of the performance was Moonchie, the high diving dog. Swan Bros. Circus was another California based fair and festival show. Brothers Andy and Mike Swan, the proprietors, put on the entire show which consisted of juggling, rola bola, dogs, a single trapeze act, and clown numbers under a tiny big top holding 350 people, 500 if strawed.

Circus Continental, produced by Bob and R. J. Kaltenbach of Chicago, had the grandstand circus at a Berrien Springs, Michigan fair in August with Lilli-Ana Kristensen with her mixed cats, Irvin Hall with his baboons, and Phil and Francine Schacht with their elephant Dondi. Jaime Garcia's Circo de Espectacular worked sixteen fairs, four with the entire show and the remainder as a scaled down thrill circus, in such diverse locales as Illinois, New York, and Pennsylvania. The season began near Dallas in May with what was apparently a non-fair related engagement. At that stand the Flying Garcias, dog trainer Zoe Anna Henry, juggler Carlos Valencia, and illusionist and bird trainer Louisa Valencia appeared beneath an 80 foot round top tent which was lengthened by a 40 foot middle section.

Dorian Blake had his Circus Sahara at fairs. He also used the title Wild West World of Illusion at a Maryland fair in the fall. Among the talent on this one was

Gary Noel with his dogs. The Carla Wallenda Thrill Circus rambled mostly in the Midwest and South from March to year's end. At a July booking at the Cass County Fair in Michigan owner Carla Wallenda and her husband Mike Morgan performed on the high wire; Wallenda appeared on the sway pole; and granddaughter Lyric Wallenda did a single trapeze act.

The King Arthur Circus was at the Meadowlands Fair in New Jersey from June 17 to July 5. Talent included the Wainwrights' living statue routine, the Fabulous Darnells with magic, juggler Michael Chirick, and producer Arthur Duchek on the high wire. Earlier in the year Duchek framed a smaller show at the Meadowlands called the Building Trades Circus, a case of the sponsor getting billing in the title. Jorge Barreda and Lou Ann Jacobs produced the circus at the Mississippi State Fair in Jackson in October. The sawdust stars included Johnny and Peggy Peers with their dogs, Arturo and Kay Castrejon with their cradle act and wheel of death, John Welde with his bears, the Urias' globe of death, and the Jacobs' elephants.

Veteran agent Tibor Alexander presented a circus at a Cummington, Massachusetts fair in August with foot juggler Vicki Howle, the juggling Hernandez duo, and Hub Hubbell who ringmastered, spun rope, and presented his horse Chief Silver Eagle. The Star Spangled Circus was a highlight of a Deerfield, New Hampshire fair with poodlist Gracie Hanneford, the Flying Wallendas, cloud swinger Sacha Pavlata, and hand balancer Willy Waltens. Owner Dwight Damon was ringmaster. Damon, usually an agent, also produced a circus for a community celebration in East Aurora, New York in August.

The Exotic Endangered Cats of the World and Thrill Show appeared at a number of fairs. Owners Yaro and Barbara Hoffman presented a cage act which was augmented by hand balancer David Remeris, and the Remeris Flying act. Bill Carpenter had six units of his Backyard Circus at fairs and four at amusement parks. This micro production utilized kids from the audience heavily in the performance.

Petting zoos, the descendants of the great traveling animal exhibitions of the early 19th century, were a fixture on fairgrounds, offering a combination of exotic and barnyard animals from goats and sheep to elephants and camels. Among companies on tour were Dave Hale's which appeared at Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade in July, Bob Jones' which

played the Ohio State Fair in August, Bob Commerford's which made the Eastern States Exposition in September, and Joe Hendrick's which exhibited at the Texas State Fair in October.

Other circus related activities on fair grounds included William Voss with the Cuneo white tigers which worked the Hawaii State Fair in May and June. Trudy Strong also worked Cuneo cats at fairs. Andre's Lions of the Serengetti worked a few fairs as trainer Andre Skarbecki interspersed educational patter with his cage act. Donn Moyer's Reptile Safari played eighteen weeks on midways. Additionally, many thrill acts worked as singles on midways. The great tradition of the side show lived on, but just barely, as only a handful of ten-in-ones continued to troop. Best known was Ward Hall's which played the big Meadowlands fair in June and July.

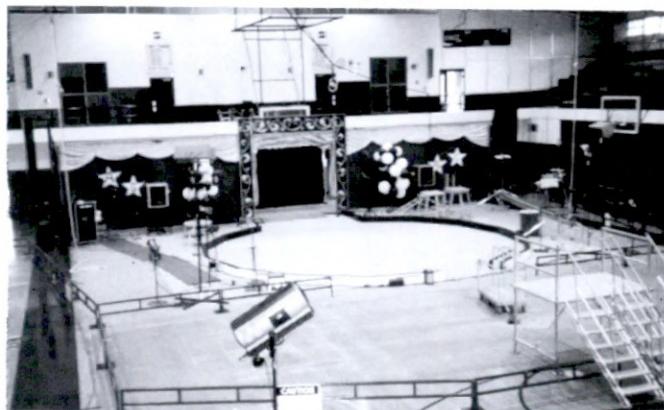
A bevy of small, mostly one ring, circuses performed indoors. While some of these companies were on the cutting edge, the vast majority offered traditional fare. Most functioned as fund raising vehicles for charities such as PTAs and veteran's groups which were unable to contract with larger circuses. Frequently selling their tickets via telephone, these troupes were called "school shows" within the trade because of their propensity to perform in school auditoriums and gyms. These aggregations usually trekked during early and late months of the year, and generally played smaller communities, often the same ones that saw tiny wagon shows a hundred years ago.

The Royal Palace Circus performed throughout the Midwest and East from May to November, and presumably elsewhere during the other months. When it played dates booked by Merle Johnson the Circus Galaxy title was used. While most of the engagements were in schools or armories, it worked at least one fair during the summer. The neatly framed trick moved on three 45 foot trailers. Owner Harry Dubsky was ringmaster and presented an uncaged leopard act. Others on the roster included Harry Dubsky Jr. with an illusion routine and his excellent hand balancing act which featured a one finger stand, Stephanie Chapman on web, the Darnells with a poodle fantasy, Kenneth Pierce in a knife throwing routine, and juggler Armando Cristiani.

The Big John Strong Circus, headed by Strong's widow Gundrun, was the leading school show in the West with a February 5 to May 13 pilgrimage through the Pacific Coast and Mountain states. A sec-

ond tour explored Colorado, Wyoming, Oregon and California in September and October. Cathy Hetzer-Rogers produced dates in the Midwest in June, October and December, using titles such as Children's Variety Show, the Wonderful World of Magic, and Santa's Christmas Show, all of which were typical appellatives of the genre. Some of her bookings were former John Strong dates. When her company appeared in Cincinnati in June for the Foster Parents' Association the talent included comedy juggler Eddie Dimingus, jugglers and rola bolaists Willy and Tinkerbell Waltens, and illusionist Floyd Bradbury who was also the announcer. Hetzer-Rogers also produced a three ring circus for a corporate client using Serge Coronas' big top.

Famous Cole Circus, owned by Ron Bacon, had ten weeks of bliss around the Ohio River through May 18, and another two and a half months late in the year. On the spring expedition, Irvin Hall presented his unicycle and baboon numbers, Mara Cristiani performed on the single trapeze, Oscar Garcia clowned and worked dogs, and Dick Johnson ringmastered and did magic. American Showtime Circus exhibited in gyms and armories in Georgia, Florida and Alabama for ten weeks in the spring and fifteen



The American Showtime Circus in a school gym. Stu Miller photo.

weeks in the fall. Tommy Lunsford sold the company to Jim Reeder in the spring. Among the performers were Carl and Patti Reed with their horses and dogs, Tom Demry with his elephant, and Sara Miller with her leopards. Stu Miller was show manager and Duke Keller had concessions.

Mike Naughton's Yankee Doodle Circus had six weeks of dates in the late winter and early spring, a week in April, and another two weeks in the late fall, all in the East. In November the talent included Randa Carey who foot juggled and rola bolaed, the Darnells with their poodles and illusions, the Bautista family in a contortion routine, and Nany and Leo Alar-

con in a comedy knife throwing act. Dan McCallum was ringmaster. Wonderland Circus rumbled from January 12 to February 5 in South Carolina. Among the features were juggler Allen Black, clown Paul Bean, aerialists Gordon and Vicki Howle, Tom Demry with his elephant, and show owner Bill Brickle with his poodles.

Billy Martin's Cole All Star Circus whoopped it up from January 11 until April 8 in western New York with George and Lauren Bertini on the low wire, the Hansen family in knockabout comedy and roller skating acts, and Angela Martin on the single trapeze. The fall tour commenced on October 6, and ended six weeks later after traveling through New York and Pennsylvania. Personnel on this adventure included cloud swinger Gary Sladek, magician John Kennedy Kane, and poodle impresario Bill Brickle. Circus Pages apparently had both late winter-spring, and fall routes. The earlier tour lacked documentation although there were hints of a date in January in Georgia, and one in May in British Columbia. The fall travels received only a bit more coverage. Starting in Pullman, Washington on September 11, the show featured Bob Steele's bears, the Posso troupe on the high wire, James Gearheart in an illusion act, and the Pages family in a number of routines. Manager Jorge Pages and his wife Frieda worked the troupe's two elephants.

Circus Fantasy played northern Louisiana and southern Arkansas for the first time during an early year swing through Dixie. Among the talent were Danny Carey, chair and hand balancing; Kevin Manns, fire eating; Armando Cristiani, juggling; Myrna Silverlake, dogs; and owner Byron Bowman, miniature horse routine. A series of fall dates was cut short. Indoor Circus Spectacular, headed by Barry Yengst, had bookings in Tennessee and North Carolina from October 7 to the 17. Circus International was in Pennsylvania and West Virginia in early June with Enrico Wallenda among the actors. Owner Larry Rich also had runs in Illinois and Indiana.

Veteran Sid Kellner's Great London Circus set up shop at a number of locations for a California police group in September. Kinkers included magician and puppeteer Ray Grant, juggler Dario Vasquez, the Dancing Gauchos, unicyclist and comedy juggler Kip Reynolds, foot juggler Chester Cable, aerialist and hula hoopist Lynn Polke, the Flying Redpaths, Dan Westfall with Jeeter the chimp, and

the tumbling and hand balancing Vita troupe. Ed Russell was ringmaster. The Royal American Circus was in Arkansas in January, in Indiana in April and May, and presumably elsewhere during the year. When the troupe played the circus metropolis of Peru, Indiana in April owner Ray McMahon was announcer and the Bertini family performed many of the acts.

The Holiday Magic Circus, produced by James La Dini, closed in New Bedford, Massachusetts late in the year. Among its entertainers were low wire walker Wendy Daniels and illusionist B. J. Locke. Marc Verreault had his Super Circus in Canada for about three weeks in the late spring with Bucky Steele with his elephants, and son Bobby Steele with his bears. Ron Morris produced school shows under a variety of titles. One in late July or early August, at an unknown location, employed the Hansen family in their juggling and roller skating turns, Robert Torres on the slack wire, the Bruskis on unicycles, and Tom Petrie with his elephant.

Joy T. Clown, and we're not making this up, had a school show out from December 7 to 20 in Texas and Georgia. On the bill were the Zamperla family with a sword ladder balancing act and a unicycle routine; the Wainwrights' living statues, trampoline and knockabout comedy turns; and magician and fire eater Brian La Palme. Producer Clown was the clown, which shouldn't be a surprise.

Reports to *Circus Report* got lost in the mail department: A number of school shows had minimal or no mention of their meanderings in the industry press. Among the operas which marched to a silent drummer were Jose Cole's Circus which reportedly had ten weeks in both the spring and the fall in the upper Midwest, the Reynolds Family Showcase Theater which apparently had about eight weeks in both the spring and the fall in the Midwest, and Dave Duyk's Circle City Circus which supposedly rambled for about thirty days in Alabama in the spring. Also inkless was Bill Birchfield's Magic Circus, and D. H. Luce and Robert Engesser's Mini Circus, the latter an animal show framed for malls which had 42 obscure weeks of work. The smallest of the small and barely qualifying for this compendium were the Jedlie Circus, a one or two person school troupe which hurrahed in the East; and the infamous Peanut Circus, a one man extravaganza sponsored by the peanut industry. There were doubtless other producers on the missing in action list.

The Pickle Family Circus defied classification, but played in small arenas and theaters, albeit more upscale ones than its school show brethren. The troupe re-

putedly had dates in the Midwest early in the year, although no confirmation of them was forthcoming. The first hard information on the show was from an early March theater appearance in Texas. The performance was a reprise of 1992's "Tossing and Turning," and featured clowns Jeff Raz and Diane Wasnak, a cradle act by Aloisia Gavre-Wareham and Denis Daviault, and a Chinese bicycle act. While the show was at the Eisenhower Theater at Washington's Kennedy Center, it announced filing for Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection. Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars in debt, the not-for-profit was reorganized and renamed the New Pickle Circus for its annual Christmas run in San Francisco, its home town.

Program cover for The Chinese National Acrobatic Circus. Author's collection.

Another troupe specializing in theater appearances was Alberto and Sandy Zoppe's Circus Europa. Meshing elements of Broadway and Las Vegas with a circus-themed story line, it was booked by theater arts groups. It performed in Frostland, Maryland and Brooklyn in early October, and one hopes elsewhere. Among the performers was son Giovanni. The non-profit Make A Circus appeared in parks, recreation centers and auditoriums in California and New Mexico. This one incorporated a story line with an uplifting message for inner city kids, and taught circus skills. The Fern Street Circus was a San Diego based non-profit. Founded by John Highkin, a Circus Flora alumnus, the production told the tale of a boy trying to locate his family. The single ring, side waller highlighted the skills of the Canestellari family and juggler Sean McKinney.

Gary Lashinsky's Royal Lipizzaner Stallion Show had two touring units in auditoriums and arenas and another at the Excalibur Casino in Las Vegas. Carlos and Susanna Svenson, late of Big Apple, were among the performers on one of the touring companies. The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow appeared in theaters throughout the year. This cult favorite, certainly the most outrageous traveling entertainment this side of ritual sacrifice, called itself "the circus of the scars" as it featured every grotesque routine ever seen in an old-time side show plus a few which were too strong to work years ago. This outfit was

the subject of a feature article in the *Wall Street Journal*, of all places, in December.

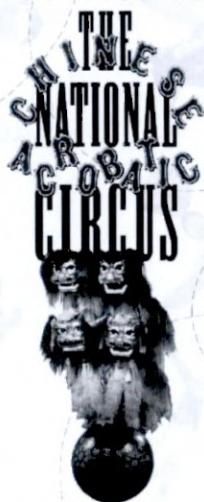
The Chinese National Acrobatic Circus had a sixteen city tour from April to July in towns such as Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Boston, and Columbus. The offering was typical Chinese fare which meant foot juggling, chair balancing, acrobatics, ladder balancing, and the ever popular plate spinning. The Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats and Magicians of Taiwan won the award for longest title of the year. It was in Skokie, Illinois on February 7 and presumably elsewhere. The Taiwan Chinese Circus, who knows if it was the same company, appeared in Pasadena, California on November 13.

Pawnee Bill's Wild West rode again when a show by that name had its maiden engagement at Fort Worth's Cowtown Coliseum in September. Headed by H. B. Baker and Allen Cartwright, its performance included classic production numbers such as the stage coach robbery.

Circuses and circus acts were popular diversions at amusement and theme parks, resort areas, flea markets, and renaissance fairs. Baraboo, Wisconsin's Circus World Museum had its strongest show ever with aerialist Elena Panova, comedy rider Mark Karoly, juggler T. J. Howell, the hand balancing Gueorguievs, Kathy Hayes with Galaxy the wonder horse, and Karoly with the Tommy Hanneford elephants. Bill Machtel and Jim Williams were the clowns; Rick Percy, the band master; and David Saloutos, the singing ringmaster. The Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee was its usual huge success as the show grounds featured a Monkey Circus with Carmen Hall with her baboons, and Eddie Steeples with his chimps. Other attractions in Milwaukee were the Royal Hanneford Circus, a circus history display and the horse fair, the latter a glorious recreation of the one on Barnum and Bailey in the 1890s. Gargantua's cage, lovingly restored to its 1938 configuration, was put on display for the first time during parade week.

The CWM produced a circus for an arts group in Fort Worth in late September, using personnel from the summer season augmented by the Carrillo brothers on the high wire and an illusion act. The Carin Cristiani elephants substituted for the Hanneford bulls. The museum also exhibited its circus history display at the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield,

FIRST U.S. TOUR



Massachusetts, and at the Oklahoma State Fair in Tulsa. Other significant events at the museum included the acquisition of a vintage cage and a Cinderella spec carriage, both formerly on Ringling-Barnum, and extensive remodeling and computerization of its library.

George and Vicki Hanneford produced the circus at the Thunderbird Swap Shop in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, changing the arenic talent throughout the year. Juggler T. J. Howell, trapezist Mark David, the aerial Ayak brothers, cloud swinger Pedro Reis, and Roman ringer Dolly Jacobs all cashed pay checks from this one. George Hanneford III and his sister Cathy worked horses and elephants the entire year. Joe Bauer produced Circus Maximus at the Great American Bazaar, another flea market, in Orlando in May with Freddy Nock on the high wire, the Espana Flyers, Phil and Francine Schacht with Dondi the elephant, and Derrick Rosaire with Tony the wonder horse.

Clown Elmo Gibb and animal trainer Tom Demry had an under canvas troupe called Family Holiday Spectacular at a Palmetto, Florida flea market in mid-December with Bill Brickle's poodles, Joanne Wilson's birds and dogs, the Zachery gauchos, and Demry's elephant. After a ten day run, this one moved to a RV park in nearby Sarasota. Harriett Souza set up her Harriett Ann's Magic Circus under the old Circus Farfan tent near the tourist mecca of Branson, Missouri, during the summer. Something called the Circus of the Clowns summered at an amusement park in Agawam, Massachusetts. The performance, which offered standard fare such as juggling, unicycling and clowning, lasted twenty-five minutes four times a day.

Among other attractions, New York's Catskill Game Park featured Johnny Peers with his dogs, John Welde with his bears, and Ben and Darlene Williams with the Woodcock elephants. Harry Thomas and his comedy tiger act appeared at the Long Island Game Farm for the eleventh consecutive year. David Tetzlaff worked his cats at grand old Cedar Point Amusement Park near Sandusky, Ohio. Nellie Hanneford summered at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire in Cornwall. Baron Julius Von Uhl with his cats, and Brett Bronson with his two African elephants performed at another renaissance event in Carver, Massachusetts. The Nock family sway poled at Tommy Bartlett's water ski show in the Wisconsin Dells.

The spot date, the creation of a circus

for a very short period, often at one location for one or two performances, was an under-reported segment of the industry. Without doubt, some of these shows were produced by well known names in the business using different titles or whose connection was not explicit. While these ventures were hardly a significant part of the landscape, a few were major undertakings and all exemplified the remarkably fluid nature of the business as these operas were literally here today and gone tomorrow.

Examples abound. David Mobbs' Circus USA appeared in two locations in the Miami area over two week ends in Oc-



Roger Zoppe and Pam Rosaire were an independent act which contracted with a number of shows. Pam Rosaire photo.

tobr. Among the features were Raya, a Chinese contortionist; the Hollywood Stunt Team; and the Flying Comets. Charles Schlarbaum directed a seven piece band, and the laughs were induced by a local amateur clown group. Harold Barnes provided a pair of four-pole tents for the performance, each 110 feet by 245 feet which also covered the ticket wagon and the concession stands.

Another big time spot date was the February 5-7 Ronald McDonald Circus in Nashville. This indoor engagement's program listed, among others, Lilli-Ana Kristensen with her leopards, Jack Cook's comedy car, the Great Wallendas, Pam Rosaire and Roger Zoppe with their monkeys, the Darnells with their dogs, the Cueneo elephants, the Flying Gaonas, and the Zamperla's human cannonball act. Producer Frank Curry was ringmaster, and McDonald's characters were part of the spec.

The vast majority of spot dates were much smaller affairs. The Hart City Circus appeared in a theater in Elkhart, Indiana in June. Produced by Mark M. Os-

borne, the performance included knife thrower Dick Haines, comic trampolinist Happy Davis, dog trainer Johnny Peers, and ringmaster Chris Kaade. A school show spot date was the M & M International Circus' appearance in two towns in Missouri in late December. Framed by Mario Manzini, the bill included the Victor Flores family in five acts, producing clown Joe Schmitt, and ringmaster and magician Peter Sturgis.

Other examples of the genre included the Malinki Star Circus which had its acrobats aerialists, tumblers, and clown at a New London, Connecticut arts center in September. Another arts center, this one

in Holmdel, New Jersey, featured Gracie Hanneford with her dogs, juggler Jay Green, the Diane Wilson seals, and ringmaster Charlie Van Buskirk. Toby Circus Ballantine produced a few shows under the Circus Ballantine banner in the New York City area, often for corporate sponsors, in the fall and winter. Wini McKay put together a performance for Taco Bell in July with clowns Dick Monday and Cheri Sicard, foot juggler Chester Cable, Russian swinger Bob Yerkes, hula hoopist Lynne Polke, and Gary Johnson's elephants.

Jenny Wallenda produced a circus for the Colony Beach Resort on Sarasota's Longboat Key at year's end. Among the talent was Frank Thompson with his elephant. Jorge Rossell and Joe Frisco put on the Peppercorn Circus in Ruskin, Florida from December 16-18 under an old Kelly Miller top. Jessica Hentoff, usually a Circus Flora stalwart, produced the everydaycircus for St. Louis' Moolah Shrine temple on March 20, the purpose of which was to kick off the ticket sale for the temple's sponsoring of the George Coronas Circus later in the year. It may have been the first case ever in which a circus advertised a circus. Tino Wallenda-Zoppe had his evangelical Circus Maranatha under a big top in Sarasota as a free attraction at a church for two days in November. If his circus worked other dates, it escaped notice.

The youth circus flourished, providing fun and entry level opportunities in the business to children and adolescences. Because America lacked circus schools on a par with those in Europe, these circuses functioned as a feeder system for new talent. An impressive number of professionals first became infected with the business on one of the many youth shows or camps which have sprung up in recent years. The oldest of these shows was Sar-



Circus Kingdom band at an Orleans, Massachusetts school in June. Don James photo.

asota's famed Sailor Circus which celebrated its forty-fourth season when it rumbled in late March and early April. Headed by Bill Lee, the performers were students at local high schools.

Another old timer in the kid business was Washington state's Wenatchee Youth Circus which began in 1954. Headed by Paul Pugh, the show open aired it on and off all summer with about 65 performers ranging in age from three to nineteen. A third long time youth show was Peru, Indiana's Circus City Festival Circus which gave ten performances in July as part of that fabled town's annual circus celebration. It celebrated its 34th season in 1993.

The Circus Kingdom had an extensive tour which took it from New Hampshire to Georgia with most of the route in the East. Headed by L. David Harris, the troupe was an outreach effort by a Pittsburgh church. The personnel were college students, obviously many of them music majors as the show had a ten piece band. Routines included trampolining, plate spinning, rolling globes, trapeze, tight wire, unicycles, and tumbling; the two hour performance closed with the actors and audience singing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands."

Other youth circuses included the Gamma Phi Circus at Illinois State University, and the Great All American Youth Circus in Redlands California, the latter headed by John Garrett. The Flying High Circus from Florida State University was in Fort Lauderdale in November. Ed Sheehan's Windy City Circus Troupe was in Chicago.

Children from nine to nineteen were taught circus skills at Circus Smirks, a camp founded by Rob Mermin in Greensboro, Vermont. After the training, some of which was by veterans of the Moscow Circus, the campers took the show on the road under a 70 foot round top tent that seated about 600. The Unicorn Circus in

Starrucca, Pennsylvania was another circus camp. Cosom Wollan was director.

Circus of the Kids worked through physical education departments to train students in circus techniques. At the end of the stay, a full blown performance was given. Headed by Bruce Pfeiffer, it taught show skills in Florida and the East, and apparently was part of a summer camp in Pennsylvania. The National Circus Project was a similar operation, although it appeared at schools for a much shorter time. It may not have been active; at least, it received no press which crossed this desk.

A number of benefit performances were conducted by generous showfolk during the year. In February the Great American Circus exhibited for the International Showmen's Association in Gibsonton, Florida. The Showfolks of Sarasota Circus was held on December 11. Volunteers included Yaro and Barbara Hoffman with their mixed cage act, bareback riders Carlos and Susanna Svenson, Derrick Rosaire with his dogs, and Rex Williams with the Vargas elephants. Many local show people appeared in the ninth annual Sarasota Circus Festival held at year's end.

Many circus performers earned pay checks at sport shows, ice shows, trade shows, dinner theaters, and cruise ships. Showrooms in Nevada and New Jersey casinos provided a large number of jobs. Las Vegas' Circus Circus Casino featured, among other acts, the Flying Caballeros, the Lazars on the perch pole and the Albulut brothers on the high wire. Bobby Berosini and his legendary orangutan act left Las Vegas early in the year when the old line Stardust Casino closed. He and his retinue moved to Branson, Missouri where the act was apparently not the hit it had been in Vegas. Berosini's training techniques were the subject of a complimentary article in high brow *Harper's Magazine* in November.

Bobby Moore and his dogs were with the Will Rogers Follies in Los Angeles during the summer. Clowns

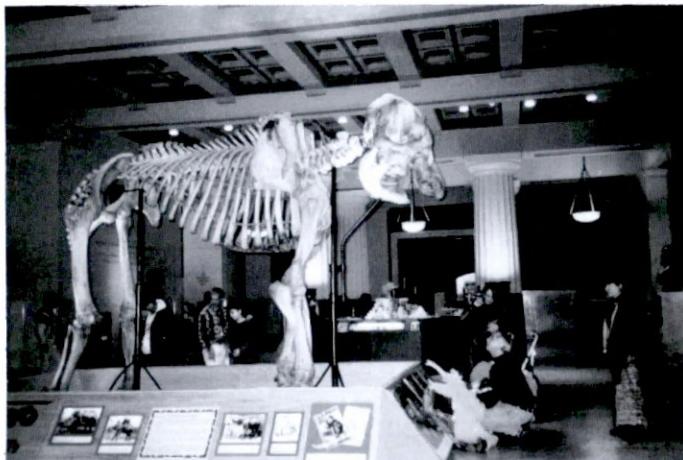
Barry Lubin and Dick Monday appeared in a comedy called "Pass the Popcorn" off-Broadway in March while Bill Irwin and David Shiner packed a Broadway theater night after night with their clown show "Fool Moon."

Among the participants in the Monte Carlo Circus festival were Deborah Chapman Green on the single trapeze, and the Guerrero high wire act which won a Silver Clown. American-born clown Peter Shub also won a Silver Clown. The Circus of the Stars television show demeaned the profession for the eighteenth consecutive year by creating the perception that movie and television actors could become competent circus artists after a few weeks practice. Among the accomplices in this travesty were troupers Kris Kilpatrick, Jay Cochrane, Richie Gaona, **Bobby** Moore, Gary Thomas and Eugene Nock.

Inductees into Peru's Circus Hall of Fame were animal trainer Reuben Castang, thrill act impresario Charles Nock, and show owner Ben Davenport. After years of effort, the Hall of Fame finally opened its doors to the public on June 10. Delavan, Wisconsin's Clown Hall of Fame took in Roy Brown, a regular on the Bozo television show; Oleg Popov, great Russian clown; Steve Smith, director of Ringling-Barnum's Clown College; Albert Fratellini, famed European clown; and Al Ross, famous Shrine funster. Honorees at Sarasota's Ring of Fame were Antoinette Concello, the Clarke family, the Nelson family, and Wilson Storey.

Jumbo came out of retirement when New York's American Museum of Natural History opened an exhibit featuring his skeleton in January which ran until late in the year. Among the participants in the dedication ceremony was Kenneth Feld. Jumbo had been in storage at the

Jumbo's skeleton at New York's American Museum of Natural History. Herb Clement photo.





P. T. Barnum's statue in Barnum Festival Parade in Bridgeport, Connecticut in early July. Herb Clement photo.

museum since 1977. In other elephant news, a baby elephant named Nickey was born at John Cuneo's compound near Chicago on December 15.

The sixth annual Emmett Kelly Jr. Clown Festival was held from April 30 to May 2 in Houston, Missouri. Clownfest '93 yukked it up at Seaside Heights, New Jersey in September. Russell Taylor had his one man Satori Circus, a performance art piece, in Detroit in October and November. John Kelly put on a performance art piece in which he portrayed the transvestite trapeze artiste Barbette at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in November. Bridgeport Connecticut's Barnum Museum celebrated its 100th anniversary. P. T. Barnum himself participated in July's Barnum Festival Parade as his famous, but much deteriorated, statue was in the march in an effort to increase public awareness of the need to preserve it.

An exhibition of Bill Ballantine's drawings and paintings was given at a gallery in Gainesville, Florida starting in October. The late Tony Diano's Diamond O Ranch was auctioned in Canton, Ohio on June 5. Among the properties on the block were equipment from the Diano Bros. Circus, part of Tommy the elephant's tusk, and three 19th century multiple sheet posters. A big show of wild west collectibles was held at Ponca City, Oklahoma, former home of the Miller brothers of 101 Ranch fame. The mansion once belonging to Peter Sells, 19th century show great, was for sale in Columbus, Ohio for a mere \$565,000.

The *Sarasota Herald Tribune* ran a four part feature article in March on that city's circus heritage, ominously titled "The Circus, A Lost Legacy." Also in Sarasota, the Ringling Museum's Asolo Theater premiered a play called "Big Top" in November which followed the career of a fictional human cannonball family from 1945 to the present, obviously inspired by the Zacchinis.

The circus fared well on the literary front as a number of worthwhile additions to our knowledge of the subject were published. Among them were biographies of Con Colleano and two members of the Wallenda family, Monte Montana's autobiography, and a book of Joe Steinmetz's fabulous photos of Ringling-Barnum in its heyday. Others included Chappie Fox's history of the Milwaukee circus parade, a scholarly account of John Ringling's relationship with Sarasota, and an annotated edition of 19th century clown Joseph Blackburn's diary. Perhaps the highlight of the year was John McConnell's long awaited biography of the Hanneford family.

As is the nature of things, many fine troupers departed this life in 1993. Among them were: Daniel Acosta, original member of the acclaimed Carrillo high wire act; Billy Baker, retired Ringling-Barnum and Vargas horse trainer; Arnold Bramow, former Ringling-Barnum executive; Ernie Burch, clown; James Conners, long time performer; Charles "Pindexter" Cowdrey, Hanneford elephant man; Axel Gautier, Ringling-Barnum elephant boss; Bill Hill, ace showman; Willie Krause, former Ringling-Barnum flyer; Gene Mendez, wire walker; Art Miller, retired Kelly-Miller general agent; Dave Mullaney, multi-talented showman; Joe Naud, monkey trainer; Henry Ringling North, Ringling family scion; Tom Parkinson, standard setting journalist and historian; Roger Prystanski, clown; Harold Twomey, long time Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey groom; Mario Wallenda, thrill act performer; and two Zacchinis, Emanuel and Bruno, human cannonballs.

This compilation, for all its errors of commis-

sion and omission, would be far less comprehensive were it not for the kindness of numerous strangers and friends who made me the recipient of a seemingly endless stream of information. This overview's merits are in large part the result of their generosity. This year's heroes include: Ron Bacon, Jim Baker, Harold Barnes, Tina Bausch, Bill Biggerstaff, Joe Bradbury, Fred Campbell, Jerry Cash, Pete Cash, Mike Cecere, Herb Clement, Fred Dahlinger, James Davis, Steve Flint, Paul Gutheil, Ray Gronso, Deborah Haney, L. David Harris, Paul Holley, Al House, Don James, Larry Kent, Mark Thomas Kineavy, Bob Kitchen, Doug Lyon, Don Marcks, Dan McGinnis, Sr., Stu Miller, Bill Millsap, David Orr, Greg Parkinson, Tom Parkinson, Fred Pfening, Jr., Dan Prugh, J. Scott Pyles, Richard J. Reynolds III, Bill Rhodes, Pam Rosaire, Peter Sierson, Ed Smith, Mike Sporrer, Andy Swan, Tim and Gigi Tegge, Stuart Thayer, Frank Thompson, Gordon Turner, Warren Wood, Bill Woodcock, and Roger Zoppe. Special thanks to Bobby Gibbs, who always goes beyond the call of duty. My apologies if I have missed anyone. As always, *Circus Report*, ably edited by Don Marcks, was indispensable. *Amusement Business, Showfolks of Sarasota Newsletter, White Tops*, various CFA top and tent publications, and cuttings from many newspapers were also useful.

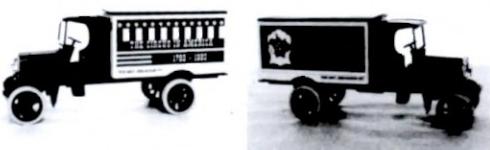
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Syvester L. "Buster" Cronin was born in Hartford City, Indiana in 1882. At age eighteen he joined out with the Walter L. Main Circus. He was later with the Great Wallace Shows, John Robinson and Howes Great London through 1911. Cronin had met Jerry Mugivan on these shows and spent most of his career working for him and the American Circus Corporation. Cronin's speciality was selling advertising banners, hung around the tent and placed on the backs of elephants in parades. He was with the John Robinson show in 1923 and 1924 and with Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1925 and 1926. From 1926 to 1928 he operated the Cronin Amusement Corporation in Deroit, Michigan, producing independent promotional shows.

When the American Circus Corporation purchased the Al G. Barnes Circus in 1929 Mugivan selected Cronin to rebuild and manage the show for the 1929 season.

Cronin remained as manager of the Barnes show through the 1937 season. Following the close of the season Cronin make a deal with Paramount Pictures to lease some of the Barnes equipment. He received payment in advance and then left for his annual vacation in Hot Springs, Arkansas. A problem occured and the studio tried to contact Cronin at Baldwin Park. Unable to locate him, the studio phoned the Ringling Chicago office. This was the first the Ringling show heard about the motion picture lease. Believing Cronin was working a side deal, the Ringling organization fired him.

He quickly found a job as manager of the new Col. Tim McCoy Wild West show in 1938. This ill fated show lasted only a few weeks.

He returned to Los Angeles, California and worked as a technical advisor on a number of circus related motion pictures. He had made a number of connections in the movie business while renting Barnes show equipment to the film industry.

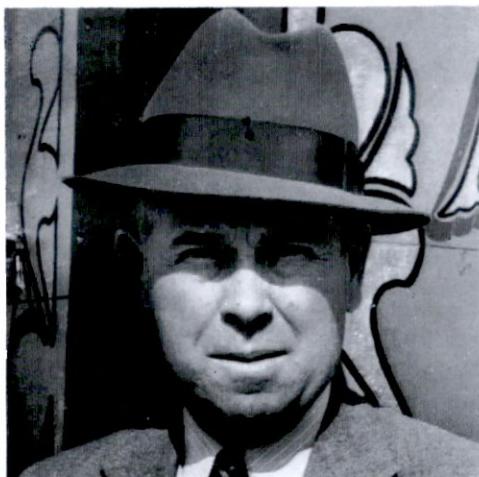
Like Sam B. Dill, Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell, other former Corporation managers, he longed to operate his own circus.

In 1943, at age sixty-two, he began making plans to open his own circus. With over forty years experience in the business he had little trouble attracting investors.

On September 17, 1943 he wrote Nat Green, manager of the Chicago *Billboard* office: "I tried to buy the Van Leer European style set up, but could not. He wanted too much for it so started framing

BUSTER CRONIN'S CIRCUS TWO SHORT SEASONS

By Fred D. Pfenning, Jr.



S. L. Cronin manager of the Al G. Barnes show in 1937. Pfenning Archives.

one myself I plan a few changes and figure to get it open in a month for a few stands maybe most of the winter, as I have several ideas that seem good to me to try. [It] will be the finest set up of any circus to date when ready. And talk about being a brute for punishment guess I will be one by the time things [are] ready. Mostly week stands with some under auspices. Keep you advised when set.

"I have part of the Selig Zoo rented get-

The Cronin marquee, menagerie and big top in 1944. Pfenning Archives.



ting my show ready and Russel Bros. will use the rest for their winter quarters.

"Conditions on the coast are wonderful, plenty of money with every one and we should have a big winner here."

Cronin planned an unorthodox circus layout. It was typified by the title he selected, Cronin's Streamlined Circus. It was to be a combination circus and night club performance. Buying equipment and putting the new show together in wartime required more time than he had ex-

pected.

He placed an ad in the January 8, 1944 *Billboard* announcing he was returning to show business with Cronin's Streamlined Circus. Another ad appeared a week later wanting acts to work one week stands on the West Coast.

The first information on the new show appeared in the January 24, 1944 *Billboard*: "S. L. Cronin is readying his Cronin's Streamlined Circus for an early opening in this section. Show has been in preparation since last spring, with initial work now rounding out into what, it is said, will be something new in circuses.

"Cronin said it would be a combination of an American and European circus. Show will feature special lighting equipment which was purchased before priorities cut down on buying of this equipment. He has been studying various types of shows and is combining his theories with actual experience in the field, he said.

"The show will have all new equipment, including lights and equipment," Cronin told the *Billboard*. "This has been in storage here the past 60 days. Wagons are being built in Baldwin Park, California, where he has leased a shop. The work was taken to this near-by community because ample space could not be secured here.

"Not only will the show feature new show properties, but the tops in acts and attractions, Cronin said. Acts are con-

tinuing to be signed, with Cronin soon to make an announcement of his line-up. Paper has been contracted, but the making of the big stuff is being held up pending a public release of stars and other attractions. While the staff setup is yet to be completed, Cronin said he would serve in a managerial capacity. Eddie Tait, former showman of the Orient, will be treasurer, and Jack Grimes will handle publicly."

Further news appeared in the February 2 *Billboard*: "Cronin's Circus will be the official title of the American-European styled show being readied here by S. L. Cronin. It will open in this vicinity the latter part of March.

"From information available, the show will be something new in the circus field. Blocks for the paper, which, too, is to be of special design, are now being made and will soon be put on the presses. To keep in touch with the artists at work on the project, the management has taken offices in downtown Los Angeles in order to supervise the work.

"In Baldwin Park, Red Forbes has a crew of fifteen building trucks and trailers. Cronin said that the wagons will be made the same size to facilitate railroad loading, giving an inkling that the show may exceed proportions rumored in show circles.

"Baldwin Park, which had been the quarters of the Al G. Barnes Circus, will be used for the Cronin show. Plans for the erection of suitable buildings are being made, calling for as much work as possible to be done within the limitations of priority building. Not only are plans being made for the opening of the show, but for post-war activities."

The Los Angeles area was a hotbed of circus activity in the spring of 1944. The new Sparton Bros. circus opened with the Golden Gate Exposition Shows carnival. Arthur Bros. opened on March 15. The new Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros. show,

Cronin ticket wagon on a lot in 1944. Circus World Museum collection.

owned by Art Cencello, opened in Santa Ana on March 20. Cronin was set to open on April 1.

The Beatty-Russell show moved quickly to play San Diego for eleven days then returned to the Los Angeles area to play Long Beach for three days before opening at the prestigious Washington and Hill lot on April 7 for a twenty-four day stand. Cronin faced serious competition.

Cronin newspaper ad used in 1944. Pfening Archives.

Additional Cronin information appeared in the March 25 *Billboard*: "Cronin's Circus is getting into final preparation for opening in this area April 1. While no route has yet been forthcoming, it is known that contracts have been signed for Pasadena April 4 to 8. There will be a two-day and a one-day stand between opening date and the Pasadena run.

"Show promises to be heavy on lighting effects, with S. L. Cronin now three-waying his time between the show's downtown office, the Baldwin Park lot and Hollywood, the last named spot where special effects are being worked out.

"Little is being released on the acts. Mark Smith's horses will be a feature. Smith has a 12-horse Liberty act, six whites and six blacks, with a glamour appeal supplied by six girls. He also has an all-girl riding act and a woman ring-

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master. Smith was with Cronin on the Barnes show and the last few years has been established here with his own stables to produce horse acts for the movies.

"Cronin told the *Billboard* that he intends to play three-day and week stands. With the cutting of the 'A' coupon as well as the 'B' books from 450 to 400 miles a month on the Coast, this date policy is expected to alleviate a number of headaches in addition to allowing the show to be viewed by more people."

The executive staff included: S. L. Cronin, general manager; George W. Pughe, general agent; Edwin Tait, secretary-treasurer; Miss Merle Cleary, Hammond organist; George McCarthy, special agent; George Cunningham, choreographer and line producer; King Ross, equestrian director; Leo Haggerty, advance; and Dick Dickinson, band leader. H. B. Clifford had the motorized concessions.

All new white canvas made the lot a striking scene. The menagerie and big top each used three center poles. The performance was given in one ring and on a stage. A large white marquee lead to the menagerie. The large Clifford lunch stand trailer was placed on the midway.

Cronin's Streamlined Circus opened on April 1 in El Monte with a two day stand and moved to Pasadena for five days starting April 4.

The April 15 *Billboard* provided an

Downtown bally truck used by Cronin in 1944. Circus World Museum collection.





One of the Mark Smith riders in the backyard of Cronin in 1944. Circus World Museum collection.

opening stand review: "Cronin's Circus, after bowing in El Monte, wound up a good five-day stand in Pasadena in the Rose Bowl. Good crowds have been on hand with comments favorable to the new type of routines offered. Admissions are 60 cents and \$1.20, with reserves getting 90 cents. A large number of patrons gained free entrance here upon the purchase of a War Bond. The bond tie-in will be a regular policy.

"Using all new equipment, Cronin's bow found a fair Saturday matinee and a good night house; Sunday, business about the same. Seating capacity is about 2,500 with slightly less than half being devoted to reserves.

"Several innovations were displayed. Using a ring for the Mark Smith all-girl riding act and other acts, which include Jumbo and His Pals and the high-school horses, Cronin displays each act to advantage. On the stage, installed in ring 1 position, a line of 12 girls take over for their part of the show. Trap acts are presented over the ring and stage. Cronin is whipping his lighting system into shape and in the future will use more black

The Rudolf Miller elephant and camel act in the 1944 Cronin big top. Circus World Museum collection.



any night club or ballroom, the three reed, four brass, three rhythm instrumentation line-up is featured. With the band turning out strictly swing music and giving fast treatment to the slower tempos, Cronin augments this with a Hammond organ.

"Circus is constructed along new lines, with no tents in front of the big show entrance. Trucks are lined along the front. Front entrance rigging is made of small bore pipe brought to a point in front to move the crowds toward ticket takers in hopper-feeding style. Show is made as light as possible.

"Although shows in this section are not finding labor as plentiful as they were led to believe it would be, Cronin has solved the problem to a certain extent by booking dark nights. Monday was dark, giving the show an extra 12 hours in which to move here from El Monte. Tomorrow will be dark, the show moving into North Hollywood for two days. April 13 will be dark, the show opening in Hollywood for seven days April 14.

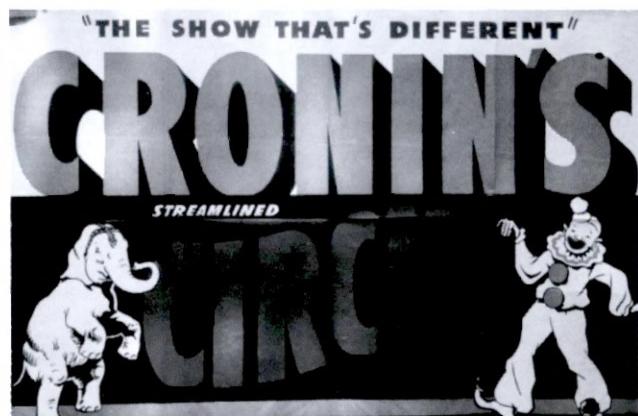
"Costuming for the line is elaborate. Girls are well trained and lookers. Cronin's Circus is like a night club with sawdust."

The Clyde Beatty name provided plenty of opposition for Cronin. The April 29 *Billboard* told the story: "With two circuses on local lots for the first time in many years, the Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros. at Washington and Hill, and Cronin's Circus at Santa Monica and Ca-

huenga in Hollywood, drew good weekend crowds. However, with the Beatty-Russell, it was a high money mark, for the show grossed about \$32,000 for the three straws in the big top and for the side show and concessions. The Russell figure was said to have been the highest mark in the history of the show.

"Cronin moved to Hollywood, a spot both Russell and Cole Bros.' shows bowed last year after playing it in 1942. Business for this new show which debuted April 1, has been fair to middling with El Monte, Pasadena and North Hollywood the towns played. Cronin moved his show out of here Thursday night for Glendale with a heavy advance sale reported.

"Cronin has made some changes. Band has been ousted, with Merle Cleary presiding at the Hammond organ. She turns in a creditable job, assisted by a drummer with snare and bass.



This 1944 Cronin poster was printed by Majestic Poster of Los Angeles. Pfening Archives.

"Following is the program:

"Display 1. On stage (ring 1) 12-girl line, a flashy number. Indian costumes featured with special and effective lighting. Lee Rowland and Shirley Howell featured dancers, with acro work putting the turn in the groove. Ring 2 features Betty Miles riding Sonny Boy. Gwen Gillespie also spotted in ring 2 turn.

"No. 2. Diane Cyrus ably handles four Shetland.

"No. 3. On stage, Rue Enos, clown, does contortion and comedy traps.

"No. 4. On stage, line girls, the Cronin cuties being featured. Dance turn is plenty active.

"No. 5. Stage features Joe Brooks, tramp clown, juggling. Winds up act with a musical anvil trick. Manuel Velarde, on slack wire in ring 2.

"No. 6. Concert announcement.

"No. 7. Mark Smith, high-school horses in ring 2, presented by Tinker Tower, Little Joe Finley, and Skeeter Knudson.



Front cover of the 1944 Cronin program. Pfening Archives.

"No. 8. On stage the Cronincuties in a parade feature with large plumed fans posed as part of the costume at the opening. Diane Cyrus vocalizes.

"No. 9. Traps over the ring with Eleanor Velarde in a series of high swings with somersault to a heel catch for finish.

"No. 10. Clowns on stage, Rue Enos, Joe Brooks and Bernie Griggs.

"No. 11. Betty Miles handles horse, Sonny Boy in ring 2.

"No. 12. Jumbo and his Pals in ring 2. Rudolf Miller with elephant, camel, Shetland and Great Dane. Act is highlighted by cautious stepping of elephant to show perfect control. Display is an illustration of punishment meted humans in India.

"No. 13. Clowns Enos and Griggs. In ring 2, trick cue stick and pool ball balancing act, good for laughs.

"No. 14. Cuties working to *Marzy Doots* on the stage. Short wardrobe with high-head plumes. Girls routine is based on Liberty act presentation, featuring pivot turns. Solid stuff.

"No. 15. Clowns in bull fight scene. Using two dogs in bull covers, the second canine proves a big hit.

"No. 16. Winston Sea Lions (three) handled by King Ross on stage. Ball and baton balancing featured, fin walks and other tricks, well received.

"No. 17. Ring 2 features the Mark Smith all-girl bareback riding act, Misses Finley, Harrington and Knudson in straight roles and Miss Miles in comedy role.

"No. 18. Clowns.

"No. 19. Ruben Castang and his Hollywood Chimps In a net cage on stage. Joe threads needle, rides bicycle and cuts monkey shines in general; Matilda does imitations of Joe E. Brown, George Arliss and others. Act is a show stopper.

"No. 20. Clowns in ring 2.

"No. 21. Mark Smith offers stock entertainment with his 12-horse liberty act. Uses six whites and six blacks.

"No. 22. Cronincuties end the show with a Russian tempoed routine. Black light is featured.

"General comment: Cronin is using lavish wardrobes. Lighting is comparable to that used on ice shows with more soon to be added; music is strictly in the groove. The animals working unusually well to a tempo to which they are not accustomed.

"Girls of the ensemble include Bille Stewert, Lee Rowland, Helen Terzick, Carole Howard, Jane Alleen, Shirlie Howell, Bobbe Sharon, Elaine Unauch, Jane Luther, Norma Lita, Laura Leo Kolpp, Ann Karol, Frances Dean.

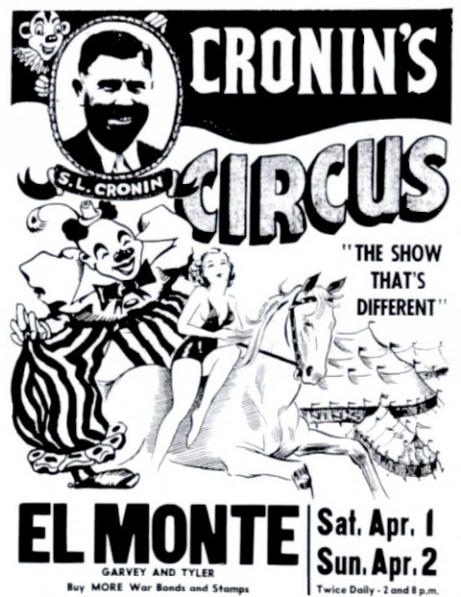
"Mark Smith girls: Betty Miles, Skeeter Knudson, Tina Harrington, Tinker Tower, Patricia Guest, Diana Cyrus, Evelyn (Little Jo) Finley, Gwen Gillespie.

"Band members: Benny Tuso, Milton Adelstein, George Keith Goland, Alfred Ramirez, Frank Campo, Bob Smith, Doug Sawtelle, Willard Leshin, Lionel Roach, Mark White and Bob Gardner."

A sixteen page program was sold on the show. The performance was listed in the center spread. It did not list the production girl numbers referenced in the review.

Business picked up in North Hollywood for three following Pasadena. During the first fifteen days the show had been out three were dark days, allowing time for moving and set up. The show laid off April 3 to make the short run to

Large Cronin Bros. bill stand in Los Angeles in 1945. Circus World Museum collection.



Cover of four page courier used by Cronin in 1944. Pfening Archives.

Cahuenga and Santa Monica Boulevards. The first two days at this second Hollywood location were strong.

Using the War Bond connection the show gained heavy publicity for the Hollywood stands. A large department store devoted one of its best display windows announcing the bond tie-in. A number of seats were set aside at each performance for war bond purchasers.

The show played Santa Paula on April 24 heading north. It was in Monterey on May 7. The move towards the San Francisco area did not improve business. The contracted route had the show in Hollister, May 12; Los Banos, May 13; Colalinga, May 15; and Hanford, May 16. It did not get beyond Hollister.

The May 27 *Billboard* told the story: "Cronin's Circus moved into the barn at Baldwin Park last Sunday and Monday after an unexpected closing in Hollister, California, May 12. The show will reorganize on a large scale and take to the road in two or three weeks, S. L. Cronin, owner, told the *Billboard*. Bad weather and shortage of labor were given as the reason for bringing the show back here. Cronin hit unusually cold nights and rain



in its trek in Northern California after leaving Hollywood April 16. Show was pulling well on matinees, but the chilly nights greatly reduced the crowds.

The personnel is being held intact for the present. Rolling stock was moved to the quarters, with the work of reorganizing already well under way. Cronin, long before launching his show, secured sufficient canvas to move into a three ring policy. It is definite that a center canvas will be added with a four-pole top being employed. This will give space for more than 1,000 additional people, making the total around 4,500 without packing.

"When the show takes to the road, a lower admission price will be charged. Cronin intends to get away from the odd money figure. Dates in this section will be played to whip the new set-up into shape before it takes the road. New paper will be one of the changes made."

The show did not reopen. In August Cronin announced he was planning a three ring circus in 1945. The title was to be Cronin Bros. Circus. The show would use the Washington and Hill lot in Los Angeles. Cronin had signed a contract in June for a twenty-four day 1945 stand there. He was not taking any chances after having been knocked out of the Washington and Hill lot in the spring by the Beatty-Russell show.

Nothing further was published about Cronin's 1945 plans until late December when it was announced that Tom Gorman, a district manager for RKO, would be with the show in 1945. It was also noted that Pat Casey was understood to have a substantial financial interest in the show.

1945

Although little was heard from Cronin during the winter of 1944-1945 he continued to prepare for a second tour. He formed a new company, the Consolidated Amusement Corporation, to operate the 1945 circus. The title was changed to Cronin Bros. Circus. He secured a square end big top and used the 1944 big top as a menagerie tent. The 1944 menagerie tent was used without any middles as a side show top. Additional trucks were leased from Jimmy Woods.

Forrest Freeland was commissioned to design special paper for the show to be printed by Globe Poster in Chicago. Freeland also designed newspaper ads and a program cover.

The Cronin Bros. Circus advertised in the March 17 *Billboard* for assistants and workingmen in all departments. The ad



Cronin Bros. Circus on the Washington and Hill lot in 1945. Pfening Archives

listed the opening for March 23 for a twenty-three days stand at Washington and Hill Streets.

The same issue reported: "Sunny Bernet, old-time vaude comic and lately a salesman for the Globe Poster Corporation and a hillbilly and rodeo announcer, will leave here Saturday (17) for Los Angeles where he will open March 24 with Cronin Bros. Circus as announcer and manager of the Cal and Ruth Thompson White Horse Troupe. Outfit includes 20 horses and 16 riders majority of whom are juveniles. This will be Bernet's first

venture into the circus field.

"Show will feature La Tosca on the bounding rope. Other acts include the Hanneford-Smith riding act, featuring Mark Smith and Poodles Hanneford, and Smith's 16 liberty horses. Kenneth Waite will arrange clown routines. Five elephants will be handled by Lawrence Davis.

"Forrest E. Freeland is handling the publicity and designed the paper and advertising. Cronin Bros. will use a special line of paper in addition to other media."

Another article in the March 17 *Billboard* told of the L. A. billing activity: "As billers for the Russell Bros.' Pan-Pacific Circus and Cronin Bros.' Circus start boiling their paste for the gigantic job of letting Los Angeles and environs known about their respective openings, Cronin at Washington and Hill streets lot March 24, and Russell in Pan Pacific Auditorium March 29, old-time circus fans are wondering if they are going to get in on an old-time billing war."

"Reports say that S. L. Cronin has tied up all spots controlled by the Callan-Kennedy snipe plant, which assures his show of a top showing, while Francis Kitzman, biller boss for Russell, countered with 'There are still lots of other good hits.'"

Although he had booked the prime lot in Los Angeles a year earlier Cronin faced serious competition from Concello's Russell Bros. Pan Pacific and Arthur Bros., both of which had gone from trucks to rails. To counter the opposition he spent a wad of money on advertising, including a

Four color newspaper ad used by Cronin on March 25, 1945. Pfening Archives.





Side show banner line on Cronin Bros. in 1945. Circus World Museum collection.

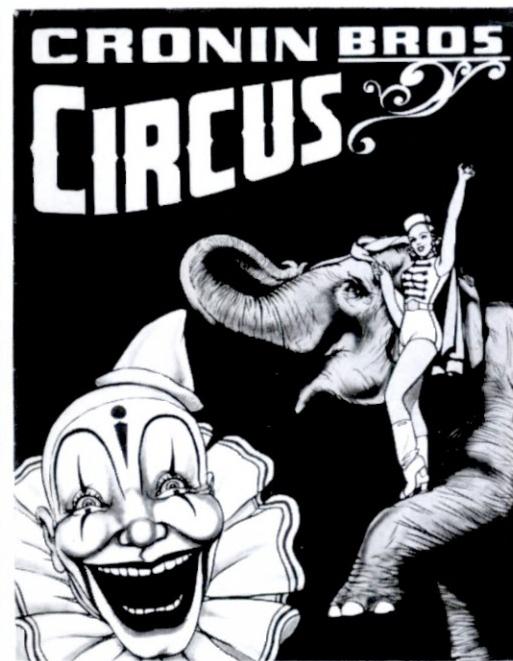
four color one third page color ad in the funny paper section of the Los Angeles Times on March 25.

Forrest Freeland designed a new twenty page program for the 1945 show. The staff listed in the publication included S. L. Cronin, general manager; Edwin Tait, treasurer; Paul Eagles, legal adjuster; Forrest Freeland, general agent; Patrick O'Toole, national advertising manager; J. J. Brasil, outdoor advertising manager; Mark Smith, equestrian director; O. A. Gilson, musical director; and Frank Chicarelli, general superintendent. The program included a number of advertisements for Los Angeles area businesses.

Two weeks before the opening the show presented a circus unit at the Sixth Ferry Command at Long Beach. The program stated that it was the first time elephants had ever visited an airplane hanger.

The Cronin big top used at Washington

Cover of the 1945 Cronin program drawn by Forrest Freeland. Pfening Archives.



and Hill Streets was leased for the engagement from United Tent and Awning. It had been used in past years for auto shows. The khaki top attracted a lot of attention, veteran showmen marveled at its square end construction and size. The tent was 300 feet long and 100 feet wide. There were no quarter poles and only four centers. Using guy wires the tent was anchored to telephone pole deadmen on each side. Guy wires were strung from the telephone poles, replacing the quarter poles. Paul Wissler was working for United Tent at the time and helped in erecting the tent. It cost \$1,500 to put it up.

The April 7 *Billboard* reported: "For the first time in years this section had three circuses to open within a week. Cronin Bros. Three-ring Circus opened the season on the lot at Washington and Hill Streets Saturday (24), and Arthur Bros. Circus debuted in Oxnard, 62 miles north, Monday (26). Russell Bros. Pan Pacific Circus opened Thursday (29) in the Pan-Pacific Auditorium, Hollywood, the first circus ever to play the auditorium.

"Cronin Bros. got under way with a three-quarter house for the opening matinee and followed with a full house, that night. Sunday afternoon was a turn-away. Show is working with the American Legion and other organizations, with the Legion band participating in the opening evening performance. Sunday night the Pacific Coast Showmen's Association was guest of the management, and Tuesday the newsboys of The Los Angeles Times attended, with 50 per cent of the house going to the Los Angeles Times charity fund.

"Cronin and Russell have been going strong on advertising. Newspaper ads, despite paper shortage, have been as large and prominent as those used by Ringling when it played this area. Both shows took to the radio for plugs. At times they were on the same station with only a few recorded musical interludes separating the announcements. Russell Bros., playing the auditorium, is going heavy on the spiel that the indoor show is 'comfortable and safe.' Rus-



Cronin Bros. big top canvas truck in 1945. Pfening Archives.

sell goes under canvas after this date, closing April 15.

"Despite competition from political campaigns, both shows have nabbed off some good banner sides. Prior to opening, Cronin used streetcar and bus sides. Russell is now using them. Two days before opening, Cronin had 33 3/4 inches on two-column ads in both the *News* and the *Herald Express* and 1 1/2 inches on two columns in the *Los Angeles Times*. At the same time Russell had 4 1/2 inches."

A *Billboard* writer visited the Cronin show on opening day and provided this review in the April 7 issue: "Cronin Bros. Three-ring Circus is an intimate show that offers good entertainment that should go well in the area it plans to play. While it has no wild animal acts or outstanding aerial turns, what is presented is done in an informal manner.

"Display 1. Spec, Cavalcade of the Circus. This makes an imposing start. Show caught featured the 50-piece band of the American Legion playing a stirring march.

"Display 2. Wach's Dogs in ring 1. Well handled by Miss Wach, but turn could have been bolstered by a stronger act. ring 3, Glenn Henry's Dogs in somersaults and big walk-thru's and other tricks that get a good hand.

"Display 3. Center ring. The Escalantes, four men in a comedy bar turn that provokes good laughs. Two do serious bar work, and two, the funny stuff.

"Display 4. Ring 1 rolling globe. Act is satisfactory. Ring 3, Penny Parker, clown contortionist, going into a barrel in a doubled-up position. A good act.

"Display 5. Bareback riding. Christine Kaehler in ring 1, Gracie Hanneford, center ring, and Janis Knudsen, ring 3. Good horses, with glamour lovelies. Gals are talented and know how to perform. Miss Hanneford is especially good selling well and bidding to be a leader in this field.

"Display 6. Winston Seals. The act was better when it had the riding seals. However, it still has plenty of pull. Presented by Anna Mueller.



Cronin Bros. big top pole semi in 1945.
Pfening Archives.

"Display 7. Clowns. Del LeClair, Ray Shockley, Johnny Besertte, Frank Prevost, George Perkins, Jack McAfee, Al Darrak. Harry Ross, Charles McDonald, Frank Stout, Sonny Jim. Harry and Loretta La Pearl are producing clowns.

"Display 8. Ring 2. The Jumping Jacks, two men and a fem in usual trampoline work. Wind-up is a triple twister that sells high. Manuel Velarde preforming wire work in ring 3, results satisfactory.

"Display 9. Track. Mark Smith and his high school horses. Show is strong on horses. Smith is an able horseman and his stock is well trained, taking the cues neatly.

"Display 10. Concert announcement. Sonny Bernet, announcer, with the Cal and Ruth Thompson White Horse Troupe. Tip was fair, despite weak opening.

"Display 11. Center ring. The Canestrellis. Here is a top act, unsupported ladders. Canestrellis' knife-in-mouth and whirling plate is good for applause. Ring 3, George Perkins and his dog. Clown act with a well-trained dog doing a lot of work.

"Display 12. Center ring. Liberty act using six white and six black horses in checker-board fashion, Smith sells this act.

Cronin Bros. ticket wagon in 1945. It was later on Jimmy Wood's shows. Pfening Archives.



"Display 13. Clown stop.
"Display 14. Ring 1, Billy Dale in cloud swing and breakaway. Center ring, Eleanor Velarde, trapeze, heel and toe catches. Miss Velarde does outstanding work.

"Display 15. Ring 1 Penny Parker in foot juggling. Ring 2 London's Lilliputians, two dwarfs, a midget and a normal size man in acrobatics. Midget does three-high carries. With the balancing and

the comedy, this act goes exceptionally well. Ring 3, LeClair, juggling, holds attention.

"Display 16. Roman ride. Thompson troupe. Excellent work with the best groomed horse to come out of Nebraska. Sock stuff and a subtle pitch for the concert.

"Display 17. Center ring La Tosca on the bounding rope. Act is exceptionally good. Costuming, that of an Indian Princess, is colorful. La Tosca winds up with a backward double somersault. Miss Canestrelli warbles Indian *Love Call*, giving the turn additional color.

"Display 18. Center ring Poodles Hanneford with Mark Smith's girls. Four horses, seven people. Good for laughs. Plenty attention garnered by the serious riding of the glamour lovelies.

"Display 19. Cronin Bros. elephants. Five pachyderms going smoothly and swiftly through 16 tricks. Elephant girl needed to glamorize turn. Animals work well. Handled by Jimmie Reynolds.

"Band, led by Red Gilson, does a commendable job of playing the show. Hammon organ and calliope give the music class and a circus atmosphere. Show runs two hours and five minutes."

Alice and Tex Orton left Arthur Bros. when it played Glendale, California, April 6, and joined Cronin Bros. The Ortons did a perch act and impalement in the after-show. Bernie Griggs, who was in clown alley with the Russell Bros. in Los Angeles, also joined Cronin.

After Los Angeles the show played Bell, May 16; Inglewood, May 17; Redondo Beach, May 18; San Pedro, May 19-20; and Long Beach May 21, 22, 23.

These dates were listed on the first route card. A second card was not needed as the show closed on May 22.

The closing may have been caused by a plaster served by Cal Thompson. A May *Billboard* said: "Through agency

offices in Chicago it was learned that Ruth Thompson, co-owner of the White Horse Troupe, with her husband, Cal, had an attachment served on Cronin Bros. Circus cash wagon April 17-18 for \$5,500 allegedly due for partial payment of the last week the White Horses were allowed to work in the show and for three weeks more under the original contract.

"Troupe was stopped before the matinee Sunday (16), the last day in Los Angeles. At that time, Cal Thompson was confined to a hospital with spinal meningitis, and show management is said to have given as a reason for the stopping that permits could not be obtained for the 12 kid riders. Thompsons shelled out \$10 a day for a private tutor so kids could work in Los Angeles.

"Local informants said Cronin wanted to settle last week's labor for troupe for \$500 when the contract signed by Tom Gorman for Consolidated Amusement Corporation called for \$1,500 per week. Gorman is said to have upped with another \$350 from his own kick for that last week to Sunny Bernet, announcer and manager for the act. Mrs. Thompson, in getting the plaster, said Bernet had no authority to accept the short dough. Cronin furnished a bond.

"Contract is said to have called for round-trip transportation from Chicago to Coast for 12 kid riders (Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, two grooms, a clown and Bernet), and one-way fare was upped when contract was signed, but no return fare was shown when act was cancelled out.

"Cal Thompson is said to have recovered enough to be released from the hospital and troupe probably will start back soon, but agency men here say Cal and Ruth will bomb it out in court with Cronin. Gorman left the show after the Bell (California) date Monday (16), the day after the Thompsons were folded."

The May 24 *Billboard* told the story of the closing: "Cronin Bros.' Circus closed Sunday night (22) in Long Beach and moved into Baldwin Park, 20 miles east of here, Monday for what S. L. Cronin said was a reorganization. He said that the show would open 'probably Saturday a week.' This would set the opening for May 6. Cronin did not say where he would begin what would be the second opening of the season.

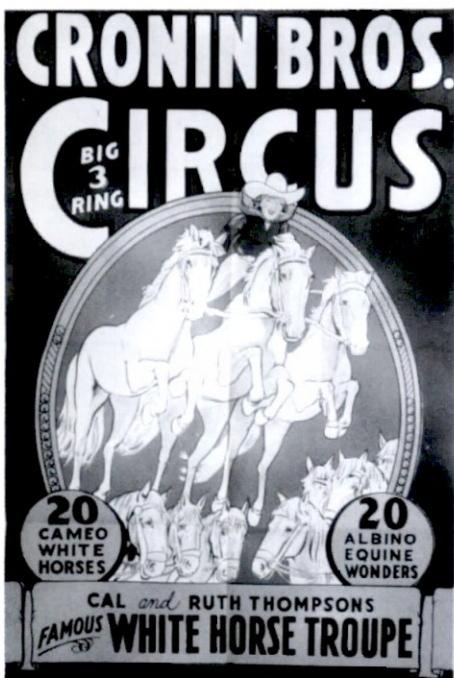
"In the meantime, Russell Bros.-Pan Pacific Circus had the territory to itself, as Arthur Bros. moved out of the section more than three weeks ago. Russell plays Long Beach this week-end for three days and then heads north. So far, Russell hasn't missed a matinee, and the crowds have been good. At Glendale, Monday (23), which is not a good circus town, the show had a fair matinee and a three-quarter night house.



One of four styles of special Cronin Bros. lithographs drawn by Forrest Freeland in 1945. Pfening Archives.

"Rumors are running rampant as to plans for this year as well as the future. One of the reports is that both Art Concello and Cronin are watching the outcome of the Ringling Bros. in New York. Concello has been mentioned by John

Another Forrest Freeland 1945 Cronin Bros. poster. Pfening Archives.



Ringling North as one of the men who can keep the Ringling show moving under canvas.

"On the tail of this story came the report that the head of Cuneo Press in Chicago had bought the show. Concello emphatically denied this report. He admitted that he knew Cuneo but only because he printed the program year before last.

"Cronin was reliably reported to have received offers from Ringling, but these were unsubstantiated by Cronin. However, the West Coast show owner said that he did have two of the 492-foot tents like he used at Washington and Hill Streets, and that with this equipment could play large towns.

"Whether or not Cronin will continue with a smaller show and play spots off the beaten track or go into the big business with the two tents was neither confirmed nor denied.

"At Baldwin Park, Cronin has maintained practically the same crew that he had at Washington and Hill, with the exception of lot help. Eddie Tait, Til Taylor, Frank Chicarelli, the Canestrellis, and others are on the lot. Mark Smith is reported staying with the show when it reopens. The five Louie Goebels leased elephants are at Selig's Zoo.

"Another well-known circus name, that of Pauline and Claude Webb, is also being prominently mentioned in the light of things. The Webbs visited the Cronin show each of the 23 days it was here. They have admitted 'thinking of a show next year.' It is also said that the Russell title reverts to them in 1946. Whether this is the main reason for Concello tacking on Pan-Pacific or whether it was the date in the Auditorium is also the basis for talk here.

"Cronin went out last year with a 'streamlined circus' and played an unsuccessful date in Hollywood against the Russell show at Washington and Hill Streets. Moving out, Cronin returned to the barn in Baldwin Park after playing through May 12. Outside of plans for reopening May 5 with a truck show, Cronin isn't telling much."

Cronin told of his plans to reopen in the May 12 *Billboard*: "The second opening this season of Cronin Bros.' Circus, tentatively scheduled for today, has been postponed, with no new date set. Show is in Baldwin Park, with the work of reorganization still on."

"No reason was given for the delay. S. L. Cronin said that he was getting things fixed right this time. A full office crew is at work. The Canestrellis are still here. Mark Smith is at his ranch but reported ready to go with the show again. Cronin said he was checking over his books, get-

ting dates for the new show and making other detailed arrangements. Cronin said he will announce his route next week."

Cronin did not reopen because he had Uncle Sam on his back. The June 16 *Billboard* reported: "Cronin Bros., the Circus, which folded in Long Beach recently after three weeks in Los Angeles and a week on the road, will be sold for federal taxes about June 20, a spokesman for the collector of Internal Revenue here said last week. Management has until that time to pay the delinquent taxes, which amount to about \$12,000.

"Inventory is now being made of the show equipment. When this is completed the sale will be announced, and it is considered likely the date of the sale will be set for June 16.

"A deal was on foot for Jimmy Woods,

ROUTE - SEASON 1945		
 CRONIN BROS. BIG 3 RING CIRCUS		
PERMANENT ADDRESS BOX 311 - 4810 SPRING STREET LOS ANGELES 12, CALIFORNIA		
ROUTE CARD NO. 1		
LOS ANGELES, CALIF. <small>Star Building & H. B. S.</small>	March 24 - April	MILEAGE
BELL, CALIF.	..	16
INGLEWOOD, CALIF.	..	17
REDONDO BEACH, CALIF.	..	18
SAN PEDRO, CALIF.	..	19.20
LONG BEACH, CALIF.	21-22-23	10
Total Mileage to Date	..	56

Cronin Bros. Circus No. 1 and only 1945 route card. Pfening Archives.

of the Yankee Patterson Circus, to buy the equipment, but up to press time the deal had not been consummated.

"The internal revenue office said that the Cronin show had been seized and would be offered for sale unless the tax is paid."

Following the closing of the show Jimmy Woods retrieved three trucks he had leased to Cronin. These units, including a four wheeled ticket trailer, later appeared on his Yankee Patterson and 101 Ranch Circus.

Cronin Bros. Circus went under the gavel at Baldwin Park June 22 for about \$12,000 in delinquent federal taxes. Inventories were supplied to interested parties, but the show was to be sold as 'a circus' or a complete package, with no one being allowed to buy the equipment piecemeal.

All the money over that due the government was to be returned to the taxpayer, it was said.

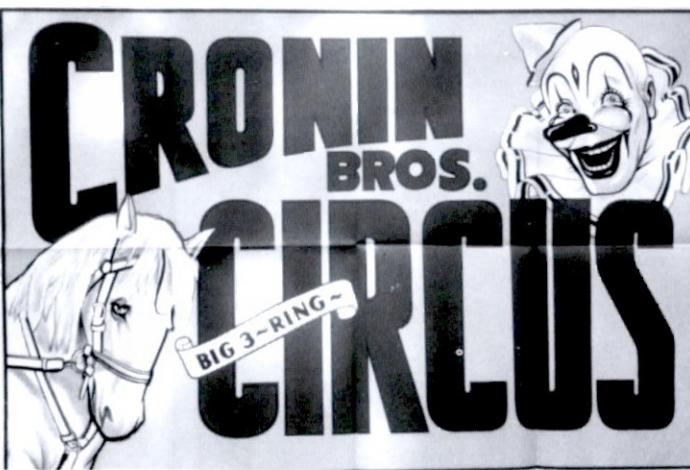
V. G. Wilson, representing the United

Tent & Awning Company of Los Angeles, bought the Cronin Bros. at a tax sale for \$8,100. The remainder of approximately \$4,000 was expected to be written off by the government.

W. T. Strouse conducted the auction of the circus at a storage lot. The bidding was opened by A. E. Gallagher, investment broker, representing himself, with \$3,000. Jimmy Woods offered \$3,500, with Claude Webb offering \$4,200. Wood raised the ante to \$4,300. Bidding increased in \$100 amounts, with E. K. Fernandez, the Honolulu showman, offering \$7,000.

When the bidding got over \$7,500, amounts were raised \$25 and \$50. Keeping the deal hot were Mel Claron, Michael M. Weisz, an auctioneer, and Wilson Weisz, who told the *Billboard* he offered Wilson \$9,100 for the equipment but was refused. Wilson refused to give any plans for the show, but he revealed that nothing was in the offing in the near future. "We'll get the show back in shape, we like it," Wilson said. Sale included rights, titles and interest in the show.

Cronin's pocketbook was hit again in December. A verdict of \$7,425.29 was



Another Forrest Freeland 1945 Cronin Bros. poster. Pfening Archives.

awarded Cal and Ruth Thompson, of the White Horse Troupe, in their suit for damages brought against Cronin Bros. Circus, as the Consolidated Amusement Company, for salaries and expenses by Judge Allen W. Ashburn in Superior Court here.

The Thompsons, as plaintiffs, charged that they were dismissed after two weeks despite a six weeks' contract starting March 31. Deal was for \$1,500 per week, with traveling expenses to and from Ne-

braska. They had arrived in California on March 17 and were asked to start March 24, with pay for that time. They were paid for that week and the following one, with only \$125 being paid on the third stanza. Expenses were paid from Nebraska.

The defense claimed that Thompson's illness greatly reduced the pulling power of the act, as he was the star. It was also brought out that some of the ten riders were minors and not allowed to work. The Thompsons showed work permits.

It is not known how United Tent disposed of the Cronin equipment. In July of 1945 Ben Davenport bought the 120 foot with three 50s big top and began using it at once on his Dailey Bros. Circus.

Cronin was back in 1949 as manager of the Clyde Beatty Circus.

After having an unsuccessful last fling in the circus business Buster Cronin retired to his home in Arcadia, California. He died on November 16, 1958 at age seventy-six.

Additional material was provided by Paul Wissler, Don Carson and the Circus World Museum.

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BOB HASSON
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We moved on to Swan River. There Dick Jones jumped me. He was just about beside himself with anger. Someone had told him that I had been side walling kids, which wasn't true. I had at times let in some poor little punks who didn't have any money anyhow and there were nearly always empty seats. But the way he got it, I was charging for it. I didn't stand still for his abuse and jumped right back at him. He didn't speak to me for about three weeks. That and another incident are the only things that I can recall about the place. Some girl wanted me to marry her and take her away from the town. Hot Cakes over heard this and offered himself, but he was so crummy looking that she wouldn't have him.

We had been out on the open plains, but in Hudson Bay Junction, Saskatchewan on July 8 we found ourselves back in the jungles once again, spruce trees, quaking aspens, sled dogs, Hudson Bay Stores, etc. The flies and skeeters were out in full force. We all suffered something awful, especially the poor animals. We were on a low lot down along a river and they just swarmed in on us down there.

This place was the jumping off point for Flin Flon, a new boom camp farther north. We were going in there for a two day stand. There was a Mountie there who was trying to keep out undesirable persons such as prostitutes, gamblers, pick pockets and such ilk. He interviewed every one with it to make sure that we were bona fide troupers and would come out with the show. He gave us strict orders not to let anyone ride out on the train. There were some girls and boys who wanted to ride out with us. I reckon we would have let the girls ride but the Mountie shook the car down at the last minute.

We were all looking forward to that two day stand at Flin Flon. We thought that we would get a little rest, but it didn't turn out that way. It was an 180 mile jump over mostly a new road bed that wasn't ballasted up very good. It was like a roller coaster and the train just barely moved along. It was about 1 p.m. before we were spotted in Flin Flon. The lot was quite a ways up a canyon. To get there we had to go up a cliff, and on nothing but a trail along the edge of the cliff. It was almost straight down onto the canyon floor. There was a giant boulder that separated the lot from the rest of the camp. Wooden steps were built up over it and down the opposite side into the jumble of tents, tin shacks and cabins that made up the town. It was three months old then.

COOPER BROS. CIRCUS

On the Road with Elmer Jones in 1936

PART TWO

By Todd Davenport

Before we could get set up there were throngs of people on the lot. The side show and the front yard was trying to hold them until the show opened. It was a straw house, and we got well there.

One Madam of a house of ill repute brought all her girls with her. She was like an old mother hen with her chicks. She carried a big hand bag and it must have been loaded with cash. She bought all the tickets, the reserve seats, the after show, and whatever the girls wanted to eat or drink. The girls were all young and beautiful and about every color there was. We old, beat up show people just stood and gazed with wordless admiration. We couldn't get them all in and a second matinee was put on for the overflow which was a full house. Where they all came from I'll never know. We boys never did

Jennie and Bill Lerche on Cooper Bros. Circus in 1936. Jim Dunwoody collection.



get back to the train for supper. In between shows a flash flood came out of nowhere and down the floor of the canyon. It was on to us before we knew it. It wasn't too deep, about two feet. Things began to float off and we were busy. All at once it went by and the lot was soon dried out. By the time we got everything back into place the people began coming on the lot.

Hot Cakes nearly started a clem. A group of miners were petting the ponies and he started to sneer at them. They didn't mean any harm. Old Scratchy just happened to be back there. As he had been a coal miner at one time and could talk their lingo, he soon had them in a good mood. I thought, "geez, is that nut going to pull something every time we get on the end of a spur line?" We had another full house that night. We working stiffs stayed on the lot. As that is far north it wasn't quite dark as yet and I went up over the stairs and down into the camp to buy some chuck for myself and the other boys. It must have been midnight but that place was like a beehive. There was a tin shack that had a wire service and a black board out front. News would come in and the operator would go out and write with chalk the latest news from the outside.

I read where Thomas Meighen, the actor, had died, and that Hitler was foaming at the mouth about Perfidious Albion and that Mossie had been strutting about that balcony telling what his Black Shirts was going to do to the cowardly British if they didn't take care, or words to that effect.

There was one of them beautiful northern lakes there but a smelter had been set up and they ran the waste into the lake, thereby poisoning it. The boys were hauling in water from springs and getting two bits a quart. It was silver mine.

I got a bag of food and started back. When I got back up on that rock I stopped to look over the country. To the south was just bush country, but to the north it was wide open. I could see ponds, lakes, and rivers. The trees were runty looking things. I wondered about this. A fellow came up and stopped to get his breath and I asked him if this country had been all logged off. He said, "Good Lord where are you from anyhow?" He told me that the place was just like the Good Lord made it, that it was the Great Barrens. He gave me a funny look and hurried on, probably thinking that I was a nut.

The second day was also good with two big houses. Every one was happy, even the grifters. There was just one Mountie there and we never saw him on the lot. The government was right in screening people before letting them in.

There was too many fine ladies and all kind of limbsters in the place as it was. I never saw so many doxies in such a small place as Flin Flon. The weather had been good both days, but during the last show it began to rain. It was still at it when we sloughed the pad room. A bunch of girls were standing under it. We tried to tell them in a nice way that we just had to tear it down and why didn't they go home. They wouldn't leave so we dropped it down on top of them. They came out from under spitting and swearing. In spite of the rain there was a crowd of them hanging around the train. I guess that they thought that all show people had lots of money.

There was a rumor that there was a hundred grand in the office safe when we rolled out of Flin Flon. I have never believed this. If this was true Elmer would have been better off to have shipped it home right away. Them that has it, gets it. Dick found a pocket book on the lot with a big roll in it. He invested it in shares of stock in the mining company. I recall seeing a stock exchange in the camp.

I no sooner laid down that night, fell asleep or fainted or something, when I woke up in The Pas, our next town, with the rain hammering on the roof. It wasn't much of a place, one single street, dirt of course, with a Hudson Bay Store, a wooden hotel with a bar, a dog livery and a livery stable, a Catholic church with a priest and two sisters, and a blacksmith shop. In some of these spots there wasn't even a filling station. But the blacksmith usually had a little gas. There was a river there that flowed north and a large band of Cree Indians were camped out on an island. The Mountie told me that in late summer they went way north and trapped all winter. Then they would come back in the spring to sell their furs and catch and smoke fish all summer. He said that they was only semi-civilized and not to bother them. They certainly were a wild looking lot. The ladies looked better than the men. They, like all females all over the world, had a way of gussieing themselves up and that made them look downright alluring.

We no sooner got on the lot than the cry went up, who in hell booked this blanket, blank spot. A steady, mild rain fell all day and was still at it when we left. There was no matinee and the night show was light. No Indians attended. Little Chief said that the priest had told them to stay away from us sinful, ungodly people. Imagine that.

We got into Monday's town, Tisdale, Saskatchewan, about noon on Sunday. We ate and moved onto the lot. It was a

piece of low ground along the Carrot River. There was a tribe of Indians camped there. They must have been plains Indians as they had teepees set up and had horses.

After I got through with my work I thought of going down stream and finding a secluded place to take a bath and wash my clothes. Thinking I saw the lads off the show, I blundered right into them Indians, all swimming in the raw, men, women, boys, and girls. I hurried by and found a spot down stream. After I got back on the lot some of the boys were talking about them Indians skinny dipping. None of them stood around and watched them. I have been challenged before about this, but it is true.

Yet that late afternoon we found a blind pig where we could buy booze, rot gut of the worst kind. There were some dirty talking white girls hanging around, and they were busy being dragged into the only bed room in the joint, perhaps two at a time, so we were not angels by any means.

But to stand and gaze at little girls swimming was another matter. Them

naked, but they would crowd in where they weren't suppose to be and look at her fully clothed.

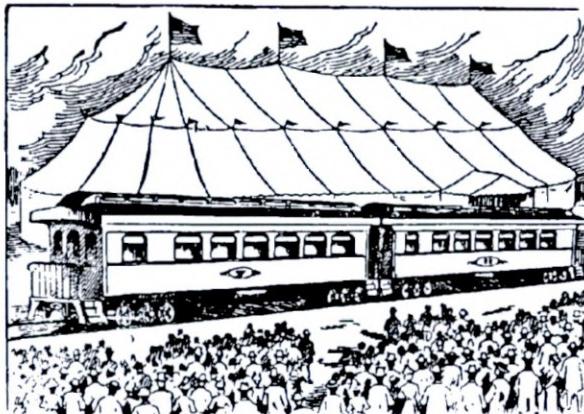
The show was pack-jammed for the matinee. The weather had turned warm and sultry. While we were eating supper the Indians tore down, loaded up and took off. Off in the west there was huge black clouds and lightning was jumping up and down in them.

There was a big argument that evening. Some were for tearing it down and loading it up before the storm struck. This was between the bosses and the help. I think that Elmer was half minded to give the order to slough it. But the grifters cried and Prof. King cried. And for some reason Elmer took Pony Red's advise. Pony as usual on Monday was in that state, one sheet loose and one flapping. So we showed to a hand full.

About midway through the big show the storm hit and it was a doozie. Elmer came in the front end and gave a signal to Billy to cut the show. Mrs. Barth was up on her trapeze, wowing them with her drops and toe catches. There was static electricity jumping around right over her head. Billy was trying to blow her down off there but what with the noise of the storm and the screams of the tip, she couldn't hear him. I was holding the rope for her to descend and I was scared for her sake. Billy cued the band to stop playing. Then the tip could hear the storm and they rushed outside. Bennie, the drummer, bellowed out, "Cheez, look at old Todd out there, scared to death."

We started to hustle the props out. Red Espy came in and told me that I would have to double up and drive Tommie's team as he was dead drunk up in the car. What a night! That little river went over its banks and flooded the lot. The lightning was continuous and the wind with hail was screaming like a thousand banshees. It was a cloud burst. I had on a businessman's style Stetson hat shoved down over the front, and yet at times I felt like I was drowning. The lightning hit one of the center poles, knocking down several men. Willie Carter was hurt bad and the others' brains were scrambled for a time. I hauled Willie up to the car on top of the prop canvas and put him in his bunk. He was paralyzed on his left side. Every time I passed the bar in the hotel I could see Capt. Irwin in there talking to the bar keep.

The last trip I made was for the light plant wagon. Water was up all around it and Joe was sitting on top of it. When I dismounted to hook up the tugs, water was up to my knees. Joe was trying to tell me a tall tale by shouting in my right ear about how this reminded him of when he



white girls were not too particular as some of them boys hadn't taken a bath or changed clothes for a long time. I drank the hooch and passed up the girls.

On Monday afternoon, the chief of whatever he was bought out the reserve seats in a block. Them Indians came in dressed in fine furs. Each one had a small fortune on them. The old chief's daughter was a racing beauty, and word soon spread about her charms. Before the show began show people began crowding in to take a gander at her. Billy had strict rules about this; the performers had to wait out in the back yard and get their cues from the band. He didn't allow anyone to loaf in the rear of the big top. But this day no one paid him any mind, and he gave up and gazed at this Indian princess with admiration. Now there should be a lesson in this somewhere. The wild rough necks wouldn't look at her while she bathed

was with the Floto show in Omaha when a cloud burst came along with high winds and blew the house down just as the cats were in the big cage. They all ran outside adding to the confusion, and the river came up over its banks and stuff began to float down toward K. C. I was just getting interested when we came along side of the hotel and he jumped off and ran into the bar and I never did hear the rest of it.

It was only a twelve mile jump to Star City and it was a good thing as we needed all the time we could get. Some of the extra help had just disappeared. Whether they were drowned, had holed up in an empty box car, or what we never knew. Willie was able to walk but could not use his left arm, but he went on the lot. The boys whose brains were scrambled still talked backwards. Lightning is funny stuff and does funny things to people it strikes. Scratchy told me that it seemed to improve that bunch of so and sos.

There was some stormy sessions on the lot that morning. Pony Red was in for a lot of criticism. He couldn't understand why. He was drunk as a lord when he was giving that bum advice to Elmer.

Billy Grant tore into Bennie the drummer for his unseemly outburst of the night before. Then he turned on me, saying that if I couldn't control my emotions any better than that, I had no business being out there.

I flew mad and told him that I could remove my presence right now and that he would never have to worry about me showing anything again. I started to leave. Little Joey, a retarded child who was the only one whom Curly could really rely on, started to cry. Both he and Billy followed me out into the back yard. Billy said, "now look what you have done, you have made that poor child cry, aren't you ashamed of yourself." It struck me as being funny. It was him not me that made Joey cry. The little Irish devil. But he had that golden tongue in his head and could twist things around to suit himself. I got to laughing and went back to work. But in a few minutes I was mad again. I was setting something and brother Jones stood there with a sneer on his face and came out with, "Jeezus, Slim you are slow," and a lot of cuss words. I told him that it wasn't seemly for a young boy to act like that.

The two weeks starting in at Tisdale was nothing. The weather was off; biz was terrible. The show must have lost at

every stand. There seemed to be a storm either coming or going all the time. Some days the heat was almost unbearable, but the nights were downright chilly. Every lot was muddy. The troupers got to fighting amongst themselves. Every little incident was blown way out of proportion.

I was now back on the big top as Curly hired a boy. I was glad to be away from that prop department as there was so much bickering going on among the kinkers. In just about every town some town kid would come up to me and hand me a note from Robert Anderson. Of course he would have to inquire around the lot for me. Anderson was going along just ahead of us telling people what a hell of an outfit we were, thieves, crooks, damn Yankees, rapists, chicken thieves, and barn burners. Lots of towners told me about this. I didn't like what he was doing, but didn't know how to get in touch with him

to tell him to lay off because he just wasn't hurting the Jones brothers, but a lot of innocent people. He was an author of sorts and later did have a yarn published in a Canadian magazine about crooked Yankee showmen crossing the border with fleecing the public in mind.

Virginia Barth was holding hands with one of the band boys, I can't recall his name. He was a typical Yiddish lad, a nice enough fellow, but old Hitler would have been nuts about Virginia, tall, blond, blue eyed, a real Nordic beauty. I think her family was of German decent. Hitler was raving about the Jews all the time, but as they say, love is blind and knows no lock smiths, or something. I couldn't understand how those kids found time to get acquainted, but they did. Toronto Bob was head over heels about Trudie Cowley, but I don't know if he ever even approached her.

Charlotte Jones was aspiring to be an aerialist and was practicing a lot.

I have always liked to talk to people in any walk of life when I had any free time, like on a Sunday. It was better than hanging around the lot and listening to a lot of show gossip, like "over there and over here," about what a big score someone made in Podunk, or about the Windy Van Hooten show and its wonders. I would take a walk and visit with different people. This put me under suspicion. Perhaps when I got back someone would snarl at me and ask: "What you been doin'? Blowin' your guts out to the rubes again?"

I never revealed any secrets. In fact I

talked about everything except show biz. Some of those guys were scared to walk alone. If they did go into town, they went in a bunch. They were afraid of towners. I think at times they had been brain washed and told that town people were all wicked and just laying in wait to do some harm to poor working boys, like giving them knock out drops and then selling their bodies to a medical school. They really believed that one.

That ale label was still sticking to the side of the car and the lads were really nuts about it. On that trek across northern Saskatchewan and Alberta there was a lot of talk about the show being hoodooed and that a Jonah was with it.

In Kinistino on July 15 nothing went right. There was a railroad lot we could have had, but Hawn rented one way out in the bush at the end of the only street. Again the cry went up, who in the hell etc., etc. The fixer again said that it had a big surrounding country. It was big alright, but the population was a lot of cows. On account of the little lot and the brush that was on it, the pad room was set up bass ackwards, the dressing rooms were on the left instead of the right. This was an omen of bad luck for sure, so said the old troupers. The way they figured it as they came out of the big top and entered the pad room, the dressings rooms should be on the right.

About five o'clock Red Espay and I were in the back yard. We were the only ones on the lot, everyone else was eating supper and we were going to get ours just as soon as someone came back. An old cowboy was sitting on his horse looking over our stock. All at once a swarm of ox flies descended on the poor animals and they started to rear up and scream. I had never seen such huge ox flies before or since. We untied them and they took off out onto the prairie. We were afraid that they would yank the top down on themselves. The cowboy asked if any of them were branded. We told him no they were not. He said you had better go after them, for once they got out there they will be the property of the first man that can slap a brand on them, that's the law. We started out and he asked "hell, your not going out there afoot are you?"

He said that he would ride out and gather them up which he did. He was gone quite a long time and we got to worrying, afraid that he might have taken them home with him. But he came in with them. He reckoned that they deserved a romp out in the open. And they did seem to be more content. Red told him that he would put him through the whole show gratis. But there went our suppers.

Red got into trouble escorting that cowboy through it. It was all deducted out of his salary. Red was a good fellow but he



believed in squeezing pennies. His laments was terrible to hear.

Shellbrook, Blaine Lake and Hafford was more of the same, bad weather, bum biz. When things were good Elmer smoked cigars, when biz was off he smoked a pipe. He was smoking his pipe all along through that Park country. Everyone got to worrying that perhaps the ghost wouldn't walk on Sunday. But it did in North Battleford, Saskatchewan that Sunday, July 19th. We laid over there and ironically, it was a warm day, not hardly a cloud in the sky. It was quite a large place on high ground. To the north was the bush, to the south open plains. A fellow told me if your eyes were good you could see plum to the Yankee border.

I took off on one of my lonesome bathing and washing clothes jaunts. I got back in time for dinner. After I ate, I was sitting on a baggage truck in front of the station. A fellow came along and asked if there were any Americans with it. I told him I was guilty. He wanted to know where. At the time I gave Titusville, Pennsylvania as my home. A man had to be from some place and I went to school there in the first and second grades. Why, he says, you are from the old original oil country. He went on to say that his daddy had been up there during the "oil excitement," and had told him all about it. That was before he moved to Oklahoma and on to Texas. He knew far more than I did about that old oil country, just from listening to his father. He was up there from Texas with a company that had drilled and brought in some wells, and had set up a refinery. He took me in his car out to show me the refinery. It was just a little one lung affair but he seemed proud of it.

Back in the old days of prohibition there was more than booze run through stills in the hoots and hollows of N. W. Pennsylvania. There were chaps who made a white gasoline, "casing head," it was called and it was sold cheaper than the legal gas. I had supper with him and his wife in the hotel dining room and they were real nice Texas people. We were due out at 9:30 p. m. I got back to the train about nine.

Things had been happening in my absence. One of the Indians had stabbed another Indian, and had taken off into the bush. The one who was cut up was in a small hospital. One of the kinkers had a birthday and he was lordly drunk. Scratchy had an argument with Elmer and had given a week's notice. A Mountie came down leading four of the boys. He had them

in the clink nearly all day for disturbing a church service. All he wanted was to see the last of them, no charges, no fines, just get the hell out and don't come back. The lads claimed that they were innocent, and that the rubes got to picking on them and didn't want them in their church. Of course they had to stick up for themselves.

The next day at dinner in Maidstone the cook was fit to be tied. He was properly scalded at Hot Cakes. It was about

Front side of herald used by Cooper Bros. in 1936. Pfening Archives.

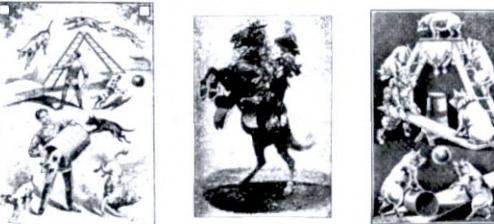
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the dog chain. This was the long chain with stakes on each end with leads running off of it. Hot Cakes had the dogs staked out under the water tank in North Battleford. He had loaded the dogs all right, but had forgotten to pull up the chain. The conductor of the local train had pulled it up and brought it to the cook house and charged Jimmy thirty-five cents for transporting it. The big rhubarb was that Cakes refused to pay Jimmy, saying that he was a stupid jig and that he, Cakes, couldn't help it if he went around throwing away his coin in such a way.

Maidstone wasn't much. The weather had turned lousy again. Nothing seemed to go right. These towns were all old fashioned, western dirt street places with a store or two, a Chinese cafe, a hotel with a bar, a blacksmith shop and a livery stable, board sidewalks, hitch racks and a few dwellings. And cords of aspen and birch wood piled up behind every building. It was a common sight in these places to see Joe Robinson carrying a gas can looking for some place to buy gas.

The weather was unsettled and every once in a while someone would say: "gawd look at this coming," and here would come a big black cloud with wind and lightning out of the west with hail as big as hens' eggs along with it.

That country was like what the American west must have been like back about fifty years before. There were many pioneers living in sods and dugouts. I had to admire these rugged people trying to make a living in an independent way.

One thing that they did have was good soil. But on the other hand that black gumbo held up progress as when it rained it turned into a sticky mess and would just ball up on rubber wheels. This discouraged the people from having cars and trucks as there wasn't any hard roads in that north country. It even stuck to iron tired wagons on wheels, and balled up on the horse's feet.

There must have been about every nationality in the world among them people. In some spots when the band played *God Save the King*, they just sat on their hands and wouldn't arise. That was their affair of course. I didn't see anyone trying to force them to stand up. But it made me see the difference between them and Americans. I can recall seeing the first Armistice Day parade in Titusville and people were packed along the curbs and when the young vets of World War I came along bearing the colors, the ladies held their right hands over their hearts and the

men stood at attention with their hats off, many with tears in their eyes. But we have changed a lot. Just last year I saw a parade in a little old town. Here comes a Marine honor guard with colors, and people just seemed to be annoyed. But they did cheer the Zem Zem clowns and the high school marching band which played the *International Vaudeville* all the way. No *Star Spangled Banner*, no *Dixie*, just high school pieces. And this was on the Fourth of July, 1978.

We wore out Vermillion, Innisfree and Vegreville and went on into Mundare. It was here that we moved on to the lot early in the a. m. It was a beautiful morning and we got the poles up, the stakes all drove, and the canvas all spread out and just about all laced up, when a wind began to blow.

No storm, not a cloud in the sky, just wind. Tiger Jack nearly got his there. He was out around one bail ring when the wind got under the canvas, billowing it up almost to the top of the poles. We could see him being tossed about like waves on the sea. It finally tossed him off at the eves.

He was shook up some was all. We threw everything there was on the big top and ourselves as well, and rode it out all day, missing our dinners. Along in the evening the wind went down and we hurried around and got it set up for the night show. There went our suppers as well. When we got loaded that night we went to the cafe and got fed. It seems to me that in any other walk of life there would have been people rallying with sandwiches and coffee.

The next morning in Lamont everything seemed to go along good. It was a short haul, the sun had come out, and we were all set up about 11 a. m. We thought we might get well there, it being a Saturday, and we were all looking forward to the layover in Edmonton the next day.

We had washed up for dinner and was just loafing, when some one said: "Jesus, look at this coming." A big black cloud was coming in with lightning dancing about in it, and we could see the wind in it. That storm just about cleaned the lot. The pad room was the only top left in the air. I can recall laying under the canvas and hearing the wind a screaming and the hail bouncing off the canvas.

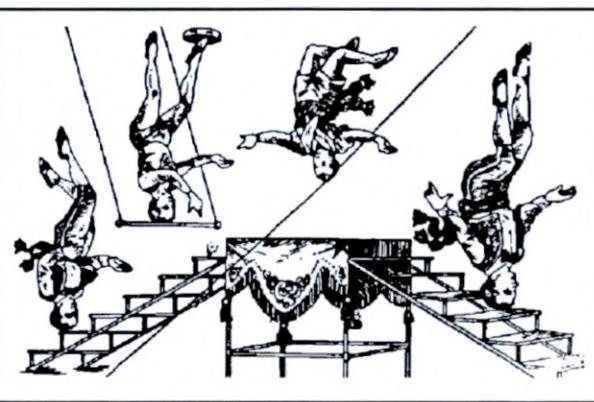
When it was over Elmer came on the lot and gave orders to set it back up just as it was, not to bother sewing anything. It certainly looked like hell. There were whole sails ripped out of it and they hung down in ragged sheets.

But the people did turn out and gave us a full house, the first one since Tisdale. There was a sail torn out right up above the red seats. When Peggy Ward was up

on her swinging ladder, every time that she went out over the seats she would fly out through the hole. She would holler "Whoopee." When she came down she said that was some view from up there.

In between shows the mayor of Lamont got to talking to me. He said that they, the people, admired our guts. They had seen that storm worrying us and they thought that we were done for and that there wouldn't be any show. Then he asked me: "Why do you do it?" I told him that I didn't know, that I often wondered about that myself.

There was a light house that night and we tore down and loaded that dirty,



ragged mess. The weather had turned cold and it almost felt like snow.

We were shifted over into the Northern Alberta rail yards in the city of Edmonton. The yard was at the foot of a main drag. We could look up it and see what a fine city it was. The sky was gray and overcast and it was cold. But no storms or rain came along that day. There was a railroad lot right along side of the siding and after breakfast we spread out the canvas and started sewing and splicing.

Scratchy blew there. We could see him going into the coach and we figured that he was going to settle his account with Elmer. It must have been a stormy session as he looked mad when he came out and he just walked past us, saying nary a word and disappeared up into the town. That is the last we saw of him that season. I did run into him at times later on and he told me that he had an awful time getting back into the states as Elmer wouldn't give him his manifest sheet.

The boys worked with a will as they figured that a city as big as Edmonton should have a skid row and as it was pay day they meant to hit that skid row hard.

But Elmer came out and told us that there wouldn't be any pay day, that he had to raise \$1,800 for a special move up into Peace River country. But if biz picked up in Monday's and Tuesday's spots he would pay us on Wednesday. Of course

everyone was disappointed, but there wasn't any grouching.

When we went into dinner Hot Cakes had to rile up the cook. He asked him how he felt about serving three meals that day. The cook said that he wasn't going to serve any three meals to a bunch of sorry white trash. So, no pay and no supper, no hitting skid row either.

Whitey Chapman, the fixer, came where we were working and called Pony Red off to one side. He told Pony that he was now the canvas boss. Pony, to give him credit, said no that he thought Willie ought to have it. The fixer said: "What? A dirty black nigger giving orders to white men, in a week's time there wouldn't be a man left." So Pony agreed to try it.

Then Chapman told him that he could move into the coach and eat with the staff. Pony said, "No. If I wuk with the byes, I sleep with the byes and I eat with the byes." Chapman got sarcastic, he tried to copy Pony's Irish accent, to wit, "And you wouldn't be after drinkin' with the byes, now would ye." Pony got real up stage. "Whitey" he said, "it behooves you not to try to talk like an Irishman, only a true Irishman has that right." Chapman gave up the subject. Pony told me, imagine that Dutch scut trying to talk Irish.

Along in the afternoon a light cold rain began and we knocked off sewing, and loaded the canvas. Red Espy and I told the boys we would go up into town and put the beg on stores and try to get the ingredients for a stew. There must be a jungle near and if they got a fire going we would be along directly with the stuff.

Red and I were saving souls and always had a little stashed away, but we didn't want the boys to know about it. We didn't intend to beg any, just to nickle and dime up any store we might find open. We did find a Mom and Dad store open and got the stuff and found a bakery and bought a big bag of toppings (second day rolls etc.). So we had supper after all.

We didn't arrive in Monday's spot, Westlock, until 12:05 p. m. And we were due out at 5:45. It was a matinee only date. We moved on, gave the show, tore down and loaded right on time. The show wasn't cut any either, but the big top sections were not laced together, just the stave ropes were tied. The tops still needed work done on them, but we didn't have any time in Westlock for such things.

It was a 305 mile jump to Spirit River, Tuesday's town. We didn't get in until 10 a. m. It was a rugged wild beautiful country.

I should explain something. There was

no connection between the two cars. The No. 11 car was ahead of the coach No. 7 when we left North Warren. When meal time came on them long jumps, we would drop out of the door of the car, land running and catch the coach as it came by. The cook house was on the forward end. After we ate, if the train didn't stop, we would walk across the couplings and mount the ladder and walk along the cat walk until we were right above an open door, slid down, grasped the door track and swung ourselves into the car. It was an old Knight of the Road trick. Old Elmer thought this plumb dangerous and was against it. If he knew before hand that we were going to be hitched behind an express train on a long fast haul, he would give us money to buy food with so we wouldn't try it.

Looking back over the years, I now realize that Elmer wasn't so bad as some people painted him. Some of the old timers with it told that his brother J. A. was a lot more hard boiled. Then too, I realized that we must have done things to have got on his nerves. One day Hot Cakes had one town boy after another going into the office and asking him for the keys to the elephant's trunk and crappy things like that. He was real sore and said if he could find the culprit he would beat him up and toss him off the lot himself. We had good biz in Spirit River.

And on to Grand Prairie, only 44 miles down the track, for a July 29th stand. The ghost walked there and it was drunk day once again. It was a nice town with tree lined streets and two Licensed Premises. The locals made a holiday out of it and had an all night dance after the show and the band played for it. So Elmer kept his promise. We wasn't due out until about 11 a.m. the next day and the pad room was left up. Whenever I got a chance like that to get away from that stinking car I did, so I flopped in the pad room, in the straw with the horses. Along about dawn I was awakened by a crowd on horseback galloping past. They were whooping and hollering, folks going home from the dance I reckoned.

I got up and built a fire and made a can of coffee and I sat there smoking and drinking coffee. All at once I became aware of a lot of cussing and whooping and here came a girl on a pony shagging a milk herd out into the open range.

As she rode by she said, "Keep that coffee hot, I'll get a cup on my way back." She sure was a wild looking little character and was a wild talker, right off calling me pet names, like Syphilis assed worm and things like that. She had a high

shrill voice and asked me, "Say, where in hell are you from anyhow, you shore do talk funny?" I told her back east. "You mean Regina, Saskatoon or Winnipeg?" I told her farther than that. She asked, "You don't mean Toronto do you?" I told her no, the states. She got up and kicked the coffee can into the fire and said, "Why you are nothing but a damned Yankee, my grand daddy came up here from Oklahoma and he told me all about you land and nigger stealing sons of bitches." She got on her pony and said, "And you can't even make good coffee either."

Elmer came on the lot, smoking a cigar and sat down. He told me that Dawson Creek was the turning point and that we would be heading east from there. I asked if that meant back to the barn. No, he says, to Nova Scotia. I thought that was a long ways off.

Business and the weather both were good in that Peace River Country. The only town we didn't make up there was the town of Peace River. Perhaps it was closed on account of the rippin' and tearin' that went on there in '34.

This was beautiful country we were troupin' through. We could see the snow capped Rockies off in the west. There was lots of good cold water from the rushing streams, lots of timber, and yet there was open prairies. The soil was so black and rich that no fertilizer was needed. The

down the main street and what about the lady's rep. He told me that there was a trail behind the joint that ran right into the lot. So I lugged her up to the lot and detoured out into a grove of aspens and came back in behind the pad room. I slipped her in under the sidewall of the ladies dressing room and by the shrieks that arose I felt that I had done my duty by her. She went on that night as per usual, a little shaky, but did all right.

The morning of July 31 we awoke in Dawson Creek. It was the end of the rails and here we would turn around for the long haul back to Warren. There was a trail on north for a ways to Fort St. John, a Mounted Police fort. A Mountie had come down from there for the day we were to be in town. He told me that it was a hundred miles up to the fort. Dawson Creek was a real nice place with a wide main and only street. There was three of nearly everything along it, hotels, blacksmith shops, livery stables, stores, but only one bank. There was a Catholic church, a hospital and a rodeo ground, and that is where we set up.

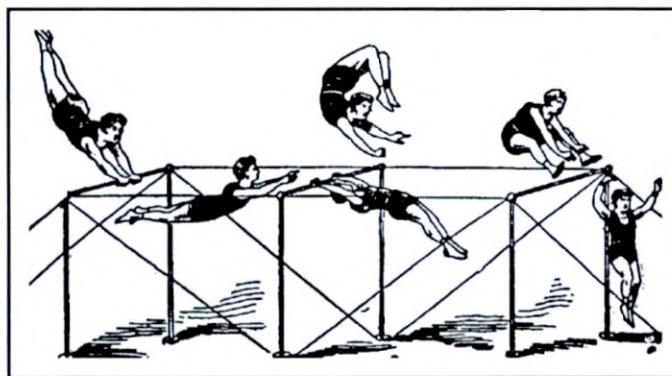
Seeing as how we were up on the end of the railroad, with nothing but a trail running back to Edmonton, over five hundred miles away, his royal highness had to show his dirty linen. An aggravating lad was Hot Cakes Slim. At the time I doubted his word about being a direct descendant of Mary, Queen of Scots, but since then I have studied her history and have come to the conclusion that he could have easily been one of her descendants.

One of the things about this boy was that he could switch lingos whenever he wanted to. From a Joisey accent he could go right into the King's English. When he was drunk he always talked like an educated gentleman.

A pretty girl came riding into the backyard on a beautiful horse, just one of them clean, wholesome girls that most of us shied from, preferring the girls who hung around the railroad yards and met the train. I guess I felt more to home with them.

Hot Cakes started in with his glib talk, and started to pet the horse. All at once the girl spun the horse around and rode out of there, with a red face. Someone asked him, "What in hell did you do to her? You gawd damned fool." He said, "Ah, she is nothing but a stupid hoser broad."

All at once I found myself surrounded by an old man and two younger ones on horse back, with the girl in the background. The men looked mad and mean. The old man asked the girl, "Is this the



nights were short this far north and we were loaded before it got plumb dark. The natives were friendly. Most of them were newcomers, pioneers.

In Hythe, a spot that had been the rail head for a time before rails was laid on to Dawson Creek, B.C., I was walking along the path in front of the hotel. The bar keep came out and told me that he had one of our girls in there, dead drunk and he wished to get rid of her. I went with him into the back room and sure enough there was one of our lasses passed out. I asked him why he didn't just let her sleep it off? No, he wanted the body to be removed pronto. He said that I could carry her, couldn't I? I asked how would it look for me to be carrying a drunk woman

man darlin'?" "No, no," she says. He said, "All right you low down show rat, where's the man that insulted my little girl?" I thought, oh my god, old Cakes has done it again. I thought that a fast razzle dazzle talk was in order. I tried to put a happy look on my face and asked them if by chance they were Kintucks? No they were not. I swore that they were and told them the way they came a ridin' in made me home sick for good old Bourbon country. I said I wasn't a regular circus hand, that I was just trying to make some money during the summer vacation from good old Theological U in good old Paris. It didn't go over. They were not interested at all.

The Mountie came by and wanted to know what the trouble was. They explained it all. He wanted to know what I knew about it and I couldn't tell him nothing. Hot Cakes had done a disappearing act. The old man and his sons were tough. They wanted to see Cakes swinging at the end of a rope and didn't mince words with the Mountie. The Mountie told them they could get a warrant sworn out and that he would pick up the fellow, but if they harmed him then he would have to arrest them. So off they rode into town to find the magistrate. Whether a warrant was ever sworn out or not, I never did know.

I was scalded by all this. For one thing I had to double up and do Cakes chores, and I still had to do my other work. In one act the attendant was supposed to wear an old red uniform. I wouldn't wear it as I was afraid of getting crummie, so I had avoided that condition. Nor would I put on the clown suit or make up for the January act. In fact I didn't do good at all and that old vet of the Barnum show, Capt. Irwin, was telling everyone that I was a bum trouper.

After a hectic day I was in my berth as the train was rolling down the track toward Wembly, Alberta. Hot Cakes swung aboard. He had caught it a few miles out of Dawson Creek. Was he chesty! He had outwitted the Mountie, the stupid country broad and all of them. Yes he sure was smart, he had missed his dinner, his supper, had walked some miles, had laid low in the woods and swung aboard a fast moving train. He thought that since we were going back into Alberta that the law couldn't touch him.

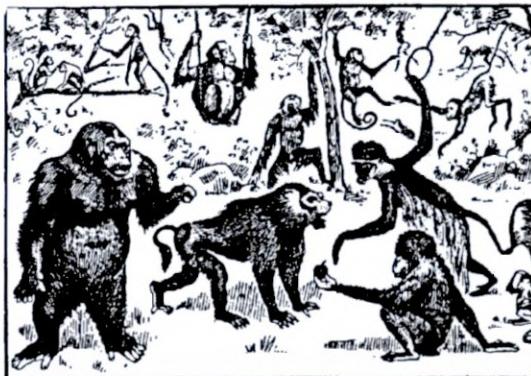
Someone wised him up up on that in a hurry. So for the next seven days he had to sneak off the train, hide out all day and catch it on the fly as it left town. Meanwhile I was still on the house and doing his work besides. I never got a penny out of Irwin either. Curly never got a cent in tips from him all season. The kind heart-

ed cook was feeding Hot Cakes on the sly once again.

In Wembly we done real good. On Sunday August 2 we were on a 144 mile run most of the day. I rode most of it up on the roof of the car. We went through some beautiful country down along the Lesser Slave Lake. It was a long narrow lake with mountains on each side. I could see the reflection of them in the water. Every once in a while a fish would jump up. Little Joey was sitting up there with me. He said, "Slim they are having an argument down there." And sure enough they were. I could hear Hot Cakes sneery voice. I thought that he was setting himself up for a red lighting party. The lads patience had just about run out with him. All at once Joey said, "lookie Slim, lookie" and pointed. There Hot Cakes was a foot running through the brush. I thought, oh my word he has been red lighted.

After a few miles a brakeman came walking across the tops and Joey told him about it. He was amazed and alarmed that someone was a foot in that wilderness. He said that if they had known they would have stopped the train and backed up, as it was almost sure death for a green horn to be out in that country alone. He said that when we stopped for water in Rycroft, the Mounties would be notified and they would look up the man. Joey said, "don't do that, the cops want to arrest Cakes." The shack said he would be better off in jail than out there alone.

When we rolled to a stop in Rycroft there stood Hot Cakes on the station platform. He had got out onto that trail and as luck would have it a truck came along and picked him up and beat us into Rycroft. This all came out at a later date.



When he crawled back into the car the boys just gave up, they thought he was a warlock or something.

Falier was a small French village. The cussin' started, to wit, "Who in hell booked this damned place?" But we did good biz there and the French seemed glad that we were there. They had a dance after the show and had the band boys play for it. I escorted a waitress from

the Balmoral Cafe to it. She was a little beauty. She didn't speak much English and my French was limited to a few cuss words, but we had a nice time any way and I nearly missed the train.

High River came and went and we had good business there and we were beginning to think that Lady Luck was riding right with us. Wednesday, August the fifth, we were going to be on a long 332 mile jump. We were to change off the Northern Alberta Railroad at Edmonton onto the Canadian Pacific. We all thought that there would be a lay over there and we could hit the skid row for a rout to make up for that other Sunday when we had to sew canvas all day.

I suppose that the youngsters of today and us would be world's apart in our ways and morals and ways of thinking. In fact I don't recall if we done any serious thinking. We just lived one day at a time. Among the show's working help of that time, the thought was of poker, craps, booze and the fine ladies down along the line. They would get into heated arguments about the merits or demerits of the girls in different cities. Some were all for St. Louie, some Louisville, others Chi and K. C. Nearly all of them turned thumbs down on the girls in Pittsburgh and Scranton, Pennsylvania, although Joe Robinson told me one of the most pleasant winters he every put in was with a fine lady in the Smokie City.

We pulled out of High River in the early morning. Hot Cakes came tearing out of the brush with a girl. He made it all right but the girl didn't. He said, "ah, well there were lots more down the road."

All of our plans about Edmonton came to naught. We slept right through the place. As we were being spotted in Hardisty, a Mountie was standing on the station platform. He had a certain look about him and I told Cakes he had better go out the opposite door, which he did. Whether the Mountie was looking for him, I don't know. This was a bum place, no matinee and a light house at night. Provost, the last Alberta town, was the same. Saturday's town, Macklin, Saskatchewan, was more of the same. Here Hot Cakes came to the surface once again. But one of Curly's boys had blown and I was back on props once again.

Something must have happened to change Elmer's mind about hurrying east as the next three and a half weeks were spent in Saskatchewan, all that time in that sunbaked, drought stricken province where one town looked much the same as the last one. It was monotonous and the troupers got to acting up and quarreling among themselves. I wondered where all them nice people that came into North Warren had got off to.

One thing, it didn't rain any. But people would say if it would only rain just enough to dampen the canvas or to bring the rubes in from the fields. The worst part of this was the water or lack of good water.

The way I understood it in this wheat country they hadn't had a good crop in three years. But in '36 there was a whopper of a crop and the natives were anxious to get it harvested before some natural calamity descended on to them. So the Good Lord smiled on them, and all over that great country everyone and his brother and sister were busy getting the grain into the elevators. Them people were working from can't see to can't see and didn't have any time for a circus, so the matinees were peopled by women and kids mostly. The grifters cried their eyes out. Everyone with it was hurting, but still the ghost walked on Sundays and the grub in the cook house wasn't too bad.

Water was the big issue. We had to buy it and it wasn't too good; some of those towns only had one well. Water was hauled in using tank wagons and sold. Anyone who had a well sold the water. But ice was plentiful and cheap. All the adults with it was drinking a lot of beer. I day-dreamed a lot about the springs that I had drank out of here, there and yonder, especially those limestone springs in old Kentucky.

But there was good side to it. The lots were dry. We woke up in today's town, ate breakfast, moved on the lot, set up, and at night tore down and loaded up. We were usually loaded before midnight and could go up to a cafe and get a feed if we wanted to or had the money. The prices, my word! Thirty-five cents for a steak and home fried spuds and Saskatoon pie à la mode and coffee.

Blondie Ward had bought a cub bear up in the Smokey Hills of Alberta and the rascal grew by leaps and bounds. By the time we got back into Saskatchewan he had lost his little cub cuteness and was getting gangling. Little Chief took over the chore of handling him and he was nuts about the animal, spending part of his money to buy tidbits for the bear. I don't think that they used much imagination in naming him. Bruno was his name.

Bruno got to be quite an adept beggar. He found that if he stood up and rubbed his belly with his left paw, held his right one out and let out with howls of anguish that people would feed him. He could polish off a gallon jug of milk in about one second. Chief tied him to a ring bolt in the car, just inside of the door. He would curl up with Bruno and it was comical to see them all warped up with one another, sleeping away. Both of them

were crummie as could be. The big argument was who gave the crums to whom. Was Bruno crummie when he joined out, or was he clean and it was Chief who loused up the bear? This was an almost endless debate.

Seeing things was going along fairly



well the people had to kick up trouble amongst themselves. Arguments among those people could lead to bad trouble.

Curly had hired a little neat looking fellow. He was quiet and a good worker. But we found that he was a professional booster, a shop lifter by trade. Being with it was a good lay for him. He was gainfully employed, and he had place to stash his loot until he got into a city to unload it to fence. It was an ideal setup for him.

This booster got smitten with Marion Clarke's charms. I don't know if she knew it or not. She no doubt did. One day in between shows he and I were loafing on the blue seats. Billy came in and told booster to take down her ladder, that it was out. Seeing that Joey or Curly wasn't around I helped him. He had just started to untie the hitch on the pole when she came bursting in, mad and swearing. She told him, "You dirty son of a bitch if you touch that rope I'll slit your throat from ear to ear." He stood there with that sickening love sick look on his face and asked, "You wouldn't do that to me would you?" She said, "The hell I won't. You just try me." I told him for cripes sake get away from that pole.

She had a dress on that had long pockets on each side and both of her hands were in those pockets. Both she and Joe were knife tossers, that is they had a knife throwing act. Billy came back in and hollered out that no one was going to slit anyone's throat. He and Marion went outside for a talk. Booster and I went back and sat down. He asked if she would have really knifed him. I said that I didn't know. Billy came in and said to leave her ladder up. Booster was puzzled. He said, "You want to know something, Slim, all you show people are nuts."

But an incident occurred along about that time that showed that there was a good side to that nuttiness. Seeing that

everything was going so smoothly, I got into the habit of building a fire on the lot for heating water to wash and shave with, and for boiling a pail of coffee with which at times I would have a bag of toppings to eat. It got to be the social center, you might say, for the working boys. I was setting there one day, rolling and smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee. A fellow was walking toward me on rubbery legs, I thought, "Oh my, a damned drunk." But he asked me in a clear, concise English accent if I minded him sitting down. I told him no if he could stand me he was welcome. I told him to help himself to the coffee and the rolls and he ate like a wolf. After he ate he kept looking at my cigarette. I asked him if he could roll them. "Oh yes, in the army we rolled them all the time," he said.

I gave him the makings and we got to talking. He was in the British army all through the war. He said that he had got trench fever and it affected his legs. That is why he walked as he did, that at times they would just fold up with him. I asked him if he was hoboeing with bum legs like that. Yes, he was. He went on to tell me that there was a Canadian Legion Hut in Winnipeg and he was going there to see if they would do anything for him. I told him that no doubt we would be going through there sometime.

As far as I was concerned he could ride the train and I would see that he had food and tobacco, but maybe others wouldn't like it. But if he was signed on then he could get \$3.00 per week and could eat in the cook house. I talked to Pony Red and as he was short of help. He was hired. I told Pony about his troubles. This was in Wilkie, Saskatchewan on August 10 and he was named Wilkie. The poor fellow tried, but every once in a while his legs just gave out on him. Sometimes at night he had an awful time crawling up into the car. He was just exhausted by midnight. Pony and the other boys were covering up for him, but his story soon spread all over the show. Billy Grant took me to task about him, asking what kind of a monster was I, to put a poor fellow like that to work when he should be in a hospital. The upshot of it was a collection was taken up for Wilkie and a train ticket was bought for Winnipeg. The cook made up a big bag of sandwiches for him. He was given a few dollars and off he went.

Seeing as how we were getting stuck up on the ends of every branch line, Hot Cakes was behaving himself in a way. We made Wilkie, Biggar, Perdue, Viscount, Lanigan, and Wynyard. Bicycles got into the news in them spots. The Chief and Hot Cakes both liked to ride bikes. This led to trouble.

Hot Cakes borrowed a bike off a boy

which he wrecked and wouldn't try to get it fixed or anything. For some reason the lad took the bike and showed it to the cook. The cook gave the boy some money to have it repaired. Hot Cakes again insinuated that Jimmy was a chump and refused to make it good. The cook got violent and said he would take it out of his hide, that and the thirty-five cents that Cakes still owed him. But I do think that Cakes came up with the geodus.

Little Chief was suppose to see that Bruno got to the lot. It was a common sight to see him and Bruno sitting on the side show canvas wagon en route to or from the lot. Chief dearly loved to ride bikes. If he could con some boy who had a bike into sitting up with the load with Bruno he would ride the bike to the lot.

Early one a. m. the light plant wagon started for the lot up the main street of a town. Little Red was the driver. A boy sat back on the roof with Bruno. I was walking in between it and the big top canvas wagon. Chief was riding the boy's bike. He was cutting in and out between the wagons, making figure eights and hollering, "Look no hands." He sure was enjoying himself. All to once the bear attacked the boy. What with his screams and the bear's snarling the team got frightened. Red was trying to control the team and at the same time trying to get the bear off the lad. I ran up along side of the wagon. The bear's chain was dangling down. I grabbed it and yanked him off the roof. He came down, snarling and slashing. He got me on the left leg. I sure wished that I was a thousand miles away. I was beating him around the face with one end of the chain, but he was backing me up. Chief came in smashing the front wheel of the bike on the rear of the wagon. He soon had Bruno begging for mercy. The boy was in bad shape and had to be taken to a doctor. What an uproar! That must have cost the show some money. We all thought that Chief would get fired over it, but he wasn't. But he didn't ride any more bikes, at least not that season. I still have the scar on my leg. Years later I was talking to an old bear man about this and he said I should have tromped on the bear's toes. But I was too afraid to have got that close to him, even if I would have known about that.

There was an Indian paint pony sporting the name of Wildfire and wild he was. Even experienced horsemen shied around him. I recall Blondie calling him a barnyard lout. He was far worse than any barnyard lout. He could kick the stars out of the heavens and would strike out with his front feet and bite. Red Espy, who was kind to all animals, tried to get chum-

my with him and got badly bitten for his pains.

One day a small girl tried to pet him and he got a hold of her elbow and was working her about. One of the canvas hands hit him in between the ears with a stake, knocking him silly. But the girl's elbow was broken. There was a stormy session between the fixer and the local doctor and the child's parents. Everyone who was in ear shot of it was sickened by the way the fixer handled it, using loud and profane language and bull dozing them

ble over this. The county D. A. gave them a verbal trouncing. They stored the old truck some place and found out that they could sell it and I never did know what happened to it.

Back to the palmy old year of 1936. It was along here that Virginia Barth and her boy friend eloped. This caused a lot of talk and excitement. But I did understand that they got married. I met Joe Robinson on Big Bob Stevens' show and he said that he had met them some place and that they had a punk. This was a few seasons later on.

There was an out break of some kind of sickness, probably brought on by bad water, fever, nausea, sweating and the like. Bennie the drummer, who had been quite fat, just seemed to melt away. He called it a season and went home. Mrs. Jones took advantage of this and sent the children home with him. We all missed the kids, but thought it was all for the best. Jimmy the porter done the drumming after Bennie left.

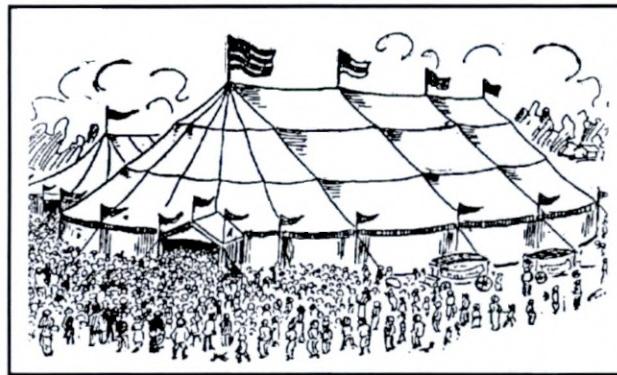
Louie Mittendorf came on from some show to take the Yiddish boy's place in the band. He was a comical little Dutchman. For some reason every time he and I met he would start to worry out loud about a possible rear end collision. He said that if that should happen, there would be dead show folks scattered all over the landscape. Come to find out he had been in that Hagenbeck-Wallace rear end collision and fire in 1918. I suppose no one who was in that could ever forget it.

We made Foam Lake, Theodore, Yorkton, Canora, Buchanan and Wadena the third week of August. All of these places were small, except for Yorkton. It had more than one street anyhow. We changed back onto the Canadian National there.

The harvest hands pulled a strike at Yorkton for higher wages. It seems the grangers were willing to pay \$4.00 per day and cakes. But the hands wanted \$5.00 per day. There was about four hundred of them congregated on the lot. We didn't pay them any mind, but I recall thinking that four dollars per day and meals loomed big to me.

One Mountie showed up with a magistrate. He, his honor, got up on the prop wagon and read the riot act to them and that was that, as the two railroads ran four different ways out of there. The Mountie would take a bunch of them and put them on a freight and then another bunch going an opposite direction. By evening they were all gone.

The booster's sister came on the lot and I overheard her telling him that there was a wanted poster out on him down at the



people. The girl stood there crying all the while. The little doctor stood firm and the up shot of it was that the show had to pay and we got orders to tear down and move out. This was right after the matinee. We were kicked out.

To my way of thinking, for what it is worth, there is good fixers and bad ones and some that were just so-so. I recall the legal adjuster on the Ringling show in 1927 and how he handled a tough situation. He was dressed like a gentleman and acted like one. The police were about to close the show just before the night performance over an incident involving the long line drivers.

Another time on the Cole show I saw that gentleman adjuster over there take all kinds of abuse from a Junior Chamber of Commerce who had sponsored the show. I think that they were trying to work a money game on the show, claiming that it wasn't all it was suppose to be, false advertising and the like. Now this was in Meadville, Pennsylvania and I always considered it a poor show town. I think the only reason that a big show made it was because it was a railroad division point and they just broke a long jump there. The lot was an old abandoned baseball park. But to hear them men talk, Zack Terrell's men were stealing the place blind. The legal adjuster just took it all calmly and worked things out.

A few years later this same crowd sponsored the King Bros. I think it folded that year. They attached a show truck, claiming the show wasn't all it was suppose to be. They got into all kinds of trou-

obey [post office]. I thought that surely he would sluff off, but he didn't. But he went about with his hat pulled down and a neckerchief around his neck as he had a tell tale knife scar on his neck. For some reason he wasn't picked up.

It seems like one of the lads had been in Yorkton two seasons before with some outfit. A girl came on lugging a child and accosted him, laying claim that he was the daddy. This boy was from the deep south and instead of getting angry and telling her to grease off he sat down and talked to her and held the baby and fondled it. After his work was over that night he escorted her home. And I presume that if he came back in '37 or '38 that there would be a second child.

At that time Canada seemed to be full of beautiful girls, fresh beauties as they didn't have the money to buy cosmetics and to go to beauty parlors. Some of them were down right outspoken about wanting a husband or mate or something. I had to laugh to my self about overhearing the lads telling these girls how they were all tied up with a contract and couldn't leave the show. But at season's end they would return. One beauty trailed the show for some time. She was after Wagon Wheel Bob. She laid claim to owning a block of wheat land and, as her parents were dead, a firm of lawyers handled her affairs, allowing her a small allowance. She did seem to always have plenty of money and rode from spot to spot on passenger trains and stayed at hotels. To give Bob credit, all he wanted from her was to leave him alone. At times we would be in a cafe late at night and she would come in and throw her arms around him, hugging and kissing him and crying. He would try to fend her off in a nice way. Hot Cakes was seething because she wouldn't have anything to do with him, or any of the other boys for that matter. Cakes just wanted her money.

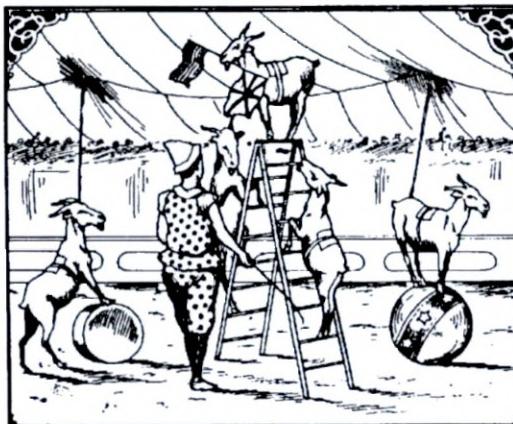
Bob was a wanderer and knew it, and was man enough not to want to hurt her. At times she would come on the lot and for some odd ball reason would pick me out to unburden herself. I had earlier in the season went through the same thing with Fats when he was mooning around over Mary.

I went through it with the Yiddish band boy over Virginia and I began to think, what the hell is this anyhow? Maybe I should go into the lonely hearts biz. Did they think that I was a rabbi, a priest, Santa Claus or Father Christmas? All I wanted to do was flop in the shade between shows, not listen to love sick swains or girls.

Toronto went heels over head about Trudie Cowley. Little Red had fallen for this pretty little girl with the beautiful

Irish eyes. I had to listen to them two daily. The booster got to mooning about Marion Clarke. I advised him to lay off as Texas Joe was a very jealous-hearted character and a party not to be fooled with.

I had my own little troubles to think of. For one thing I didn't like that mild Canadian tobacco. And it was also expensive. A ten cent packet of it only lasted me one day, and the papers were extra. At that time in the states Bull Durham with two packs of papers was selling for six bags for two bits in the A & P stores. Then too in the states one could



buy a huge schooner of beer for a dime while on those parched plains it was two bits per bottle. As the water in them parts wasn't up to par I was drinking more beer than I should have, that is more than I could afford. I limited myself to one bottle a day. I dreamed about good cold spring water all the time. So I had my own troubles.

The show working men at that time were a wild wandering lot. They just couldn't seem to bare to stay in one spot more than one day, even laying over on a Sunday seemed to chaff them. They were glad when Monday came around. Many of them wouldn't troupe with carnies for this reason.

That season of '36, Ray Rogers' circus had come up from South Carolina and moved into Pennsylvania and settled down to stay in the state for some time. The working boys deserted in droves or so I heard. Some of them were with us that season.

Pony Red got along with the boys real well. He worked right along with them. He was always joking and talking, causing them to laugh. At times at night he would scare them by telling Irish ghost stories. They were enough to make a person's hair stand on end.

One Saturday night the railroad had moved us out of a town about five miles onto a siding and left us there until late Sunday night, I suppose because the rubes were in a rage over the graft in the

front yard. We had to fend them off until a switch engine hooked on to us and moved us out. We stayed there until an east bound train latched on to us and took us to Monday's town. There was a little village about two miles east and I had went down there to get supper in the cafe. It was dark when I started back. The sky had become overcast and there was a few spatterings of rain. The wind was howling and every once in a while through the clouds I could see a crescent moon.

There was a tin shed along side of the track about a half mile from the train. I could see lights coming from it. I looked inside and there were some of the troupers sitting there with a fire burning on the dirt floor. I went in and sat down. Pony was telling his Irish ghost stories. There was Barney Aronsen, Jimmy and Trudie Cowley, Little Red and Toronto, both of them on each side of Trudie and Tommy Dunn. Pony kept right on telling his stories. Each one seemed to be worse than the preceding one. What with this and the wind moaning and the tumble weeds blowing up against the shanty I could feel my hair on the back of my neck standing straight out. Trudie's eyes were big and I saw her move an inch or so over toward Little Red. Jimmy and Tommy looked as though they were paralyzed. I could see that Toronto was affected also. Barney sat there with his arms folded, smoking his pipe. All to once he got up, knocked out his pipe and said, "This is a lot of damn foolishness. I am going to bed," and walked out alone, mind you, and down the track. Someone breathed out, "There goes a brave man."

We put out the fire and started walking back toward the cars in a cluster with Trudie in the center. It seemed no one wanted to be on the tail end. I know I didn't. In that fashion we walked to the cars. I don't think that anyone in that bunch was an out and out coward, but it was just the weather, the time and place, and them awful stories.

No one tried to push Trudie out of her center place anyhow. It seems odd today, with women's lib and all, how we felt we were honor bound to protect the ladies, in some places putting them in the center and escorting them to and fro.

I always thought lots of men had a kind of brotherly affection toward the women, not thinking of them as sex objects, but more like sisters. I like to think that some of them looked on me as a brother. One thing that enraged us was to have Stage Door Johnnies come siding up to us and asking about the girls. They seemed to think that we were a canvas nest of sex orgies. My Gawd!

So we went from town to town. They all looked alike. Things were going too

smooth and people got to quarreling among themselves. What we needed was a blow down or a clem or something to weld us together once again.

The last week in August we showed in Totzke, Saskatchewan for the matinee and jumped fifty miles to Young for the night show. We were due out of there at 11:45 p.m. For that one day we were all together, working for the common good.

Something kind of funny happened in Humboldt that week. The only siding was lined with grain elevators. The race track extended a ways past them. The coach was spotted out on this extension as the grain elevator people were afraid of sparks from the stove's chimney. The car was spotted down near the end of the switch track. The siding had a slight downgrade all the way. I don't know how or when the boys got the idea of connecting the two cars together. There was really no reason for it, as the engine that picked us up would have done it easily. After supper and after the fire had gone out some of them released the brakes on the coach and got it rolling by pushing it with manpower. It got to rolling and they all jumped aboard laughing and shouting. It picked up good speed and ran out of control, hitting the tunnel car and starting it to roll. It, in turn, slammed into a string of box cars and they jumped the track at the closed switch. There were box cars scattered all along the main line. The station agent had to send out wires east and west. The No. 7 car stopped just short of the switch.

This caused no end of trouble. A big hook had come out of somewhere to set the thing right. Elmer was so mad he couldn't even talk.

We were in Watrous, Saskatchewan on Saturday August 29. The siding was right along side of the lot. As we were not due out until 6:45 Sunday evening the pad room was left up. There was a salt lake about four miles north. It was decided to have a picnic there on Sunday. Everyone went but the cook and his wife, the car porter, Willie Carter, and myself. The drivers took the two teams and wagons to haul the people and food. I had drawn the short straw as to who was to stay on the lot. The blacks holed up in the cars for a day of rest.

I built a fire, had a pail of coffee and a stew, and was heating water to wash my clothes and to take a sponge bath in the pad room. I was going to bathe inside while the fire was outside. Willie was in his bunk reading. He liked to read mystery stories. Everything was plumb peaceful. The animals were resting. Even the dogs were cat napping.

I was sitting there drinking coffee and

rolling smokes, thinking what a grand life this trouping was after all. All to once I became aware that someone was shouting at me in a foreign tongue. I looked around and there was this awful looking fat woman with a girl standing alongside. The only words that I could under-



stand was the cuss words. I was young and hot headed then and it irritated me to be sworn at like that. She pointed at me and said something to the girl. The girl shook her head no. The old dragon started to go into the pad room. The only words I could think of was, non, non, and verboten or stay out.

She tore in there anyhow and raged around and came out. Then she started in on me. The girl just stood there dreamy eyed. I asked, "Are you a mute, can't you talk, can you talk English?"

"Oh yes," she says.

I asked what to hell is this all about?

She said, "She is my mother and she is looking for a man."

I told her to tell her mother to go to Vancouver or Winnipeg or some place then. That there should be lots of men in those places.

She gave me kind of a superior know-it-all look as though I was the village half wit or something and said that she didn't want to talk about it. I told her that some one who could talk English had jolly well do some talking as I didn't like to be sworn at. She talked to her mother in their own lingo and the old heifer swore some more at me and they left.

After a bit they came back with an old man. He could talk broken English and he told all. The night before some showman had taken advantage of their Nell and the old girl wanted to get her hands on the rat to drag him and the girl off to a priest. I thought naturally the man was

one of the working boys. But the old fellow told me that it was a clown. I couldn't think which one it could have been. Parento was the youngest, but he was such a sober sides. Billie Lerch had a love affair going on with his wife Jennie. I eliminated Barney. Could it have been Jimmy or Jack De-Shon? I never knew who it was and never wanted to know.

I told them I had only been with it for two days and didn't know the people, but as we were due out at seven thirty they could come back then and prowl the train. I figured that we would be many miles east of there by then. They were smarter than I thought. They went to the station agent and he told them the correct time of our departure. The old gal came back and raised hell with me and they left for the time being.

About noon the wind began to blow hard. The pad room got to jumping around and the animals got frightened. I led out the ponies, horses and the mule and tied them to the cars, staked the dogs out along the cars, dropped the top down, rolled it up, pulled the stakes, and loaded everything but the top sections.

I told Gracie, the cook's wife, that I was going to take a walk and started toward the lake. I had only got about half way when I met the picnickers coming back. I told Jack De-Shon about that deal and I kind of figured that he would pass the word.

HERE WE ARE AGAIN!

In honor of the celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the birth of the American Circus, we have arranged for the re-publication of:

ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN CIRCUS

VOLUME I

1793-1829

by Stuart Thayer

First published in 1976 and long out of print, this new edition (with some corrections and additions) is still the most comprehensive history of the first thirty-seven years of the American circus ever published.

The pioneers of the ring, John Bill Ricketts, Victor Peppin, Jean Breschard, Philip Lailson and their troupes, their programs and their travels appear here as do the early American proprietors Nathan Howes, Aaron Turner, Price & Simpson, J. Purdy Brown and all the others.

If the beginnings of the tented circus, the movements of the circus into the West, the fires and fights and triumphs of the early companies interest you, then this is the book in which to read about them.

Paperbound, 5"x 8", 8 illustrations, 240 pages. \$30 (postpaid) from the author.

Stuart Thayer
430 17th Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98112
Edition limited to 250 copies.

The season of 1893 opened in Carbondale, Kansas on April 29. An advertisement in the *Carbondalian* promised: "A Monster Amusement Enterprise consisting of Intellectual, Moral and Unique Features of Every Description," among which were "Funny Monkeys, Beautiful Shetland Ponies, Comical Clowns and Laugh Makers." Special mention was made of "The Exquisite Performing Dogs." There were "More New Features this Season than Ever. The Prices are very low, compared to the Show." Admission, Adults 25 cents; Children under 9, 15 cents. An exhibition of an unidentified act on the show grounds was "Free to All on Arrival of Parade."

The staff, as listed in the advertisement consisted of "J. M. Barry, Gen'l Manager; D. A. Kennedy, Gen'l Advance Rep; Wm. Dorr, Master of the Arena; Lew Cole, Manager of Museum; Prof. Logan, Gen'l Manager and Leader of the MASTODON GOLDEN BAND."

The management will Positively not allow GAMBLING or GAMES of any kind in connection with the Show. So you can bring your families without the least fear of being insulted and robbed by dishonest change artists."

Barry was a man of his word and gambling was seldom a problem on any of his shows.

The *Carbondalian* reported on the opening exhibitions of April 29: "The Great American Shows exhibited here last Saturday, but owing to the rain it was not as well attended as it otherwise would have been. They have a good show, and Mr. J. M. Berry (sic), the rustling manager, has many friends here (his home) who will join in wishing him the success in his enterprise that he deserves. He is a good citizen, and the public wherever he may exhibit, will have a chance to see a good show, and receive fair, courteous treatment at his hands."

The first road date was May 1 at Overbrook.

"Barry's show to be in Overbrook May 1st, was promptly on time," according to the *Overbrook Herald*, "and was greeted by a large crowd. The menagerie consisted of one old lion. The circus part was also a failure, and the only interesting thing about it was the trained dogs. The attendance was very large, and Barry made a handsome profit from his two performances here."

The *Scranton Gazette*, in speaking of the exhibitions of May 2, gave Barry one of the greatest reviews of all time, "The

ONLY BIG SHOW COMING Chaste, Moral, Refined, Elegant Pleasing, Entertaining Dazzling and Truthful

Vol. I, Chapter One, Part Two, 1893
By Orin Copple King

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Great American Circus has come, done it and gone."

At Burlingame the *Osage County Chronicle* reported that, "The Great American Circus, of Carbondale, showed in this city yesterday [Wednesday, May 3] to small audiences. The menagerie consisted of a real live lion and the juggling and performing was all done by a 15 year old boy, and some dogs. They have four ponies in the course of training and a billy goat that is yanked over some chairs with a strong rope, one clown sings 'tu rul ey' and the ringmaster cracks the new and refreshing joke about not allowing a fool to go ahead of him. The circus closes with the privilege of buying tickets to the con-

Great American ad in the Carbondale *Carbondalian* on April 22, 1893. Kansas State Historical Society.

THE GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS, MUSEUM —AND— MENAGERIE. Will Exhibit at Carbondale,



Saturday, April 29th.

A Monster Amusement Enterprise, consisting of Intellectual, Moral and Unique Features of Every Description.

Funny Monkeys, Beautiful Shetland Ponies,

cert for ten cents each."

The *Lyndon Journal*, speaking of the performances of May 4, noted that, "The Great American Show, showed its show to our show people, but the show didn't show up in the canvas as well as it did on the show bills. The elephant and the camel had got sick and were left behind. The lion and the cougar, with the monkeys and trick dogs comprised the menagerie part of the show. The four trick ponies and two ring horses were all there was of

the show. The great street parade was comprised of a band wagon and a six man band, a ticket wagon, a monkey cage, a cougar cage, a lion cage, four ponies, a donkey and a clown."

The Lyndon city council in special session reduced the license fee from \$50 to \$15.

Everyone expects a circus to exaggerate its wonders, but a handout in the *Lebo Enterprise* abused the privilege in speaking of the coming exhibitions of May 9.

This will be a great event for Lebo, for this is one of the largest shows on the road this season and gives universal satisfaction. The performance is strictly moral, amusing and educational. The parade is said to be extremely elegant, consisting of elephants, camels, dromedaries, open dens of wild animals and a brilliant cor-
tege of thoroughbred horses, ladies and gentlemen elegantly costumed on prancing horses etc."

Following circus day the *Enterprise* described the parade, "The show came and went. The parade consisted of a band wagon drawn by four flea bitten gray horses followed by a lady on horse back accompanied by a bow legged escort—Then 4 dun colored, bob-tailed Pawnee Indian ponies led by 4 boys—next came a boxed wagon with a billy goat on top. The next wagon had several good looking water spaniels on top, and was followed by the star actor astride of a mule. The most interesting part of the performance was the free Punch and Judy entertainment outside the canvas. The menagerie consisted of a toothless old lion, a Missouri snake, two parrots, two or three monkeys, two badgers called porcupines, and dismal swamp turtle called a grave digger. The greatest attraction about the whole outfit was the managers, for their monumental gall in advertising so much and showing so little."

The *Enterprise* remarked in another column that, "Some one has reported no elephant with the show. There was. It was painted on the canvas."

The *Altoona Journal* treated the Great

American more kindly: "Barry's circus was in town Wednesday [May 17] with the usual side show and other adjuncts. The day was a perfect one and the show did a good business. All its bills were paid promptly and the company left a good impression with all with whom they did business."

The *Journal* was able to state the above in spite of a handout carried May 12.

"We are gratified in being able to announce to the American people that after years of catering to the public and the expenditure of fabulous sums of money, we are enabled to present to our numerous patrons a consolidation of exhibitions unlike and superior to all others in magnitude, originality, talent, display, novelty, size, attractiveness, newness, neatness, morality, wealth, and all that can tend to make this the best of all big shows. We are prepared to say truthfully and honestly that our great American shows (and many times larger than ever before) overshadow all other big shows in every conceivable way, and we are without a parallel in the history of tented exhibitions. Knowing full well that with all these stupendous and bewildering features we must draw daily three times more people than any other big show, we have, after mature deliberation, reduced the price of admission. The enmity of smaller and inferior shows who still charge the old time high prices is naught to us. The same high standard of morality which has ever characterized our exhibitions will be maintained, and no gamblers, fakirs, or other dishonest people, will be allowed to follow or accompany our great moral shows. Trusting in that keen discrimination with which the American people have ever judged the truly great and the inferior, I beg to subscribe myself, the public's most obedient servant. J. M. BARRY, MANAGER."

Gamblers and fakirs were not allowed on the show grounds, but liars were an exception.

After commenting that, "Quite a crowd was in Tuesday [May 23] to see the show," the *Edna Independent* went on to report a rare instance of gambling. "Did you ever see a circus but what had some kind of a gambling scheme that was connected with or followed it? Some of the boys sorely regret their experience of bucking the tiger show day. When you learn to know you can't beat a man at his own game, you are a wise man in that respect."

Following the evening performance a gang of toughs raced their horses through the streets "whooping and hallowing and shooting their pistols."

Circus! Circus!
J. M. BARRY'S
GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS
—AND—
English Menagerie.
The Joyful Tidings are Proclaimed! The Year's Best Holiday Draws Near, and in a Few More Days
THE AMUSEMENT KINGS WITH J. M. BARRY WILL BE HERE AT BELLE PLAINE
TUESDAY, JUNE 20.
Two Performances Daily, Afternoon and Evening.

J. M. Barry Circus newspaper ad in the June 15, 1893 *Belle Plaine News*. Kansas State Historical Society.

The Cedar Vale *Commercial* was opposed to sin and berated the fools who took a chance with the gamblers following Barry's show. The *Commercial* heaped shame on the show day losers of June 9.

"Remember, fellow citizens when you plank down a silver wheel on a chance game while at the same time you are owing a store account for several months standing, and when you are a year or two in arrears on your home paper, and while the pastor of your church is finding a tough time to live 'exclusively of the gospel,' that it lessens chances for more favors at the store, throws you in a bad light in the columns of the paper and finally lands you just on the outside of the pearly gate after the gate is locked."

"The circus last Wednesday [June 21]," according to the *Clearwater Echo*, "was poorly attended.

"The mercury stood at 98 in our office Wednesday. It was so hot that our devil swore off work and went to the circus. You know it must have been awful hot.

"The wind blew so strong last Wednesday evening that the managers deemed it unsafe to show. But few persons were disappointed."

In spite of the wind and the dust the ladies of the Clearwater Christian church cleared about \$20 on their ice cream stand. The *Echo* reported the presence of fakirs and gamblers following the show.

By the middle of June Barry's ads were graced with the following: "The joyful tidings are proclaimed, The year's best holiday draws near, And in a few more days the amusement kings, With J. M. Barry will be here."

A mention of Josie Door and her \$10,000 dog act began to appear in the advertising.

The Conway Springs *Star*, concerning the exhibitions of June 22, had kind words for the Great American: "J. F. (sic) Barry's 'Great American Circus' showed here yesterday. It is a very good little show and better than the average shows that travel over-land. Of course there is nothing very big about it, but nearly all the performances are as good as can be seen in the larger shows. They struck this town at the wrong time, but there was a fair attendance in the afternoon and a good attendance at night. Farmers were busy harvesting, and Barnum's circus would not have attracted them from the fields—a good compliment for our farmers. Mr. Barry showed in Argonia yesterday.

"It was a good honest show for 25 cents. The contortionist, Mr. Louis Dupont, is one of the best we have ever seen and the performing dogs are quite an attraction. Our people were very well pleased with the show. They treated everybody nicely and Mr. Barry is an accommodating gentleman."

From time to time personnel returned home to Carbondale for short periods. During the season the *Carbondalian* noted the visits of George North, James Newell and Arthur Green. Green was a ticket seller.

There was an excitement at Medicine Lodge on June 27, that was not on the bills. The *Cresset* reported that, "Two of the roustabouts of Barry's circus got into a rumpus over a girl of the town Tuesday night and one of them being somewhat intoxicated, drew a knife and chased the other around the tent determined to have gore. Under Sheriff Boyd arrested him and lodged him in jail. Next morning he was taken to Luallen's for breakfast, but while the attention of the guards were drawn to other matters the prisoner gave them the slip and skipped to parts unknown."

In another column the *Cresset* reported that, "There are a great many worse shows on the road than J. M. Barry's great aggregation of living wonders. The ring performance was better than expected. The contortionist was the finest we ever saw, and the trained ponies did not behave badly. The performance by Prof. Cook, the magician, in the side show was the best part of the show. He is an artist. The performance both afternoon and evening was well attended. The show is billed for Aetna on July 5th, Eldred on July 6th, and Kiowa on the 7th, but the route has been changed so that the show will not make those places."

Many of the towns played by the Great American had no newspapers and it is all but impossible to establish the complete Kansas route. Below are the known Kansas dates for the season of 1893: April 29, Carbondale, Opener; May 1, Overbrook; May 2, Scranton; May 3, Burlingame; May 4, Lyndon; May 5, Melvern; May 9, Lebo; May 10, Hartford; May 11, Madison; May 13, Toronto; May 17, Altoona; May 20, Independence; May 22, Coffeyville; May 23, Edna; June 6, Caney; June 8, Elgin; June 9, Cedar Vale; June 14, Douglass; June 19, Mulvane; June 20, Belle Plaine; June 21, Clearwater; June 22, Conway Springs; June 23, Argonia; June 24, Harper; June 26, Attica; June 27, Medicine Lodge; July 4, Anthony; July 5, Attica, Cancelled*; July 5, Bluff City; July 6, Eldred, Cancelled*; July 6, Caldwell; July 7, Kiowa, Cancelled*; July 7, South Haven; July 8, Gueda Springs; October 20, Carbondale, Winter Quarters. *Route change.

After an uneventful two-day opening in their winter quarters town of Argentine, Kansas, on April 28 and 29th, Lemen Brothers' Colossal Shows moved on to Osage City for exhibitions on Monday, May 1, 1893. Advance agent E. J. Gosney called on the Osage City *Free Press* on April 17, and placed a two-column ad for two insertions, plus four handouts, all of which were used over and over in the Kansas press.

Featured in the ad was a large cut of the elephant Rajah who was described as "Two inches Taller and 3,000 lbs. Heavier than Jumbo. RAJAH! THE BIGGEST BORN OF BRUTES! THE BIGGEST BRUTE ALIVE! THE BIGGEST FEATURE YET!"

Rajah was "Secured at a cost of over \$25,000. A towering giant among his fellows. The very lord of beasts. Taller! Larger! Weighs more! Costs more than any elephant ever captured alive or brought from his native jungle! RAJAH is on exhibition at all times in the big tent. No extra charge—one ticket admits to all the shows."

No human performers were mentioned in the ad, but two other animal features were exploited.

"Positively the Only BOXING KANGAROO! In the World. He will appear in the ring at each performance in fistic contests with his trainers. The Only Two WHITE SEA LIONS! on exhibition, from Alaska. Secured at a cost of \$10,000."

The ad claimed an investment of \$1,000,000 and daily expenses of \$2,500. The show boasted of 30 cars moving in two sections.



Clowns Al Ferrice and Sammy Nelson on Lemon Bros. Circus in 1893. Pfening Archives.

One of the handouts in the *Free Press* emphasized that, "Through an arrangement entered into between the proprietors of the leading shows of the country, the Great Lemen Bros. Shows, which appear in Osage City on May 1st, will be the only tented exhibition of any importance that will visit this section of country this year."

Another handout was purported to be a quote from the Louisville *Courier-Journal*. The report glowed with praise from a city that did not see the show in 1893.

The two white sea lions shared a handout with the boxing kangaroo. "The white sea lions were captured in Alaska on the Kas-Ko-Vin river while being worshipped by the natives." The boxing kangaroo "is said to be the greatest novelty of the season." The Lemen Bros. Shows "are said to first class in all respects."

The fourth handout concerned Rajah and was used extensively the year before.

"Bigger Than Jumbo.

"New York, April 15—The steamship City of Bangkok, which arrived here yesterday from the East Indies, brought the largest elephant ever landed in this country. He came from Rangoon, in the Bay of Bengal, and is 11 feet 112 inches high, two inches higher than Jumbo was. His name is Rajah. He is consigned to Lemen Brothers, Kansas City, whither he was shipped last night. Although a special car had been constructed for him by the Pennsylvania railroad, the roof, which was built as high as the railroad tunnels would allow, just touches his back. When placed in his car, Rajah knocked out the roof with his trunk. It was hastily repaired, and then Rajah started on what will probably be an eventful journey, in the care of five keepers. Lemen Bros. and Rajah will be at Osage City May 1st."

The May 4 *Free Press* reported that, "The circus has come and gone. A large number of people came to town to see the elephant. The streets were lined with peo-

ple from city and county. We presume they all enjoyed themselves. Our impression is that this show was free from the usual following of confidence men and sharpers that are usually found with a circus. At least we have heard of no victims."

Thanks to the circus being in El Dorado, Wednesday, May 3, the city council could not get a quorum and rescheduled its weekly meeting for the following Monday. In the opinion of El Dorado's *Industrial Advocate*, "These are very nice people, but it was the general opinion that the circus was very light at one end and nothing to brag of in the middle."

Lemen Bros. Colossal Shows, "The Only Big Show Coming to Arkansas City This Year," shared space on page eight of the April 28 *Arkansas Valley Democrat* with an aggregation called Ringling Brothers' World's Greatest Shows. Lemen Bros. scheduled Arkansas City for May 4. Ringlings were due on May 20, "and not before." Ringlings advised the citizens to "Wait! The Big Show Comes." The two ads were separated by a column of legal notices. The *Democrat* had no comment following circus day.

Arkansas City was followed by a brief invasion of Oklahoma. Guthrie, Friday, May 5; Oklahoma City, May 6; El Reno, May 8; Kingfisher, May 9.

Lemen Bros. returned to Kansas at Caldwell with exhibitions on May 10. The *Caldwell News* reported, "The circus has come and gone, having exhibited at this place yesterday. It was not as good as had been expected and a great many were disappointed in it. The menagerie was small and the tent performance was limited, both in quantity and the skill of the actors. They had a fairly good crowd in the afternoon but not so large at night, the evening performance being very short. To-day they are at Wellington."

The Peabody *Gazette*, reporting the exhibitions of May 12, stated that, "Lemen Bros.' circus arrived on time, last Friday, made a very presentable street display and was rewarded with a good attendance in the afternoon, but a very light one at night. We cannot brag as to the merit of their performances, but their menagerie certainly includes a monster elephant, too wild and untamed to take part in the procession. The managers are gentlemanly and allow no gambling concerns on the grounds."

The Herington *Signal* carried a fanciful handout concerning the kangaroo, ahead of the exhibitions of May 13.

"A kangaroo is the latest candidate for the boxing championship, and while Jim Corbett and Peter Jackson are screwing

up their courage to accept the challenge, it is daily having a 'mill' with its captor and trainer, Prof. Landeman, with the great Lemen Bros.' shows. The animal fights under the Marquis of Queensbury rules, shakes hands before starting, promptly ceases hostilities at the call of time, and retires generally to his own corner between rounds, though he is guilty of occasional lapses. At a recent contest the first day opened in favor of the man, but the kangaroo, after the third round, had not turned a hair while his opponent was in a profuse perspiration. The exhibition is amusing and increasing (sic) in its way. The Lemen Bros. will positively exhibit here this season."

Following show day the *Signal* noted a rarity. "One of the attractions brought to town by the circus was a female fakir who was well supplied with cheek, small envelopes and cards, and incidentally a few clocks, watches and a lot of cedar lead pencils which she sold for twenty-five cents each."

A story in the Clay Center *Times* regarding performances there on May 15 indicated that all was not well with Lemmen Bros. Colossal Shows.

"Lemen Bros.' circus is considerable of a fake. Barring the big elephant there is not much in either circus or menagerie to interest or instruct. The elephant is a monster. An immense audience attended Monday afternoon, but it was light in the evening, when the performance lasted but an hour and a half. Just as bearing on wages paid by a circus, it is reported that a large number of cheaper workmen left them here, because of a cut in wages. They were to have received five dollars per week, but when the ghost walked Saturday night each man was paid \$1.50 for his week's work. That, of course, included board."

After Belleville, May 17, Lemen Bros. entered Nebraska for a few dates, Nelson, May 18; Hebron, May 19; Beatrice, May 20; Pawnee City, May 22.

The show returned to Kansas for three more dates beginning at Sabetha on May 23.

The Horton *Headlight* reviewed the exhibitions of May 24, "The street parade was about the only part that was worth the price asked." It was, of course, a Free Street Parade. "The management of the circus are perfect gentlemen and fair in their dealings. Most of the heads of departments are also courteous and gentlemanly in their treatment of the public. One exception however is the vender of reserved seat tickets, who is one of those indolent self-important individuals so often seen at circuses.

"Probably 1,500 people attended each performance."

The Horton *Commercial* also had a few observations: "As usual on circus day in Horton, the Indians [Kickapoo] were all in yesterday and about half of them drunk. Some of them found lodging in the city bastile before 9 o'clock. The police succeeded in maintaining very good order.

"L. C. Dessert [or Dessart], one of the managers of Lemen Bros' circus, is a cousin of Joe Diss. He is the man who went to India, purchased 'Rajah', and brought him to Kansas City. Rajah is still unconquered. He weighs six tons and stands 13 feet

Lemon Bros. newspaper ad in the May 19, 1893 Sabetha *Republican-Herald*. Kansas State Historical Society.

high. Three of his legs are always chained."

It is an agent's duty to pay the least possible for a license, but at Troy on May 25, the agent complained about paying \$10 for a city license.

The show left Kansas after the Troy date and made an extensive tour of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and Missouri before returning to Kansas for exhibitions at Argentine on August 28.

In a report concerning the performances of August 31, the Leavenworth *Times* said much about Rajah.

"Yesterday was circus day, and large numbers of country people were in town to 'see the elephant.' Since the death of Barnum and Forepaugh and the consolidation of their interests, many smaller shows have started up, and at the present growth, bid fair to soon rival the larger organizations. When the Lemen Bros. circus was in Leavenworth a few years ago it was a small circus, but the show put up yesterday indicates that success is being rapidly attained. The chief attraction with Lemen Bros. is the big elephant, 'Rajah,' who was imported by Mr. Dessert and is, without doubt, the largest living animal. 'Rajah' is not possessed of an angelic temper, and he is kept chained, and only handled when being taken to and from the train. The circus men are all afraid of him, and go no closer to his ponderous trunk than can be helped.

"Henry Herkert who had been in the employ of Lemen Bros.' circus was down town yesterday and swore out a warrant before Commissioner Clough, charging one 'Property Bill,' with having assaulted and battered him to some extent after Herkerts' discharge from the service of 'props,'" according to the *Times*. "Before the warrant could be served the alleged assailant had quit his job of clothing the actors and skipped for parts unknown, probably to join the show again at Atchison to-day."

The Atchison *Daily Champion* had little to say about the exhibitions there on September 1, but it did note that "Cliff Hetherington and A. W. Simpson were up at four o'clock this morning to see the circus come in."

"Lemen Bros. circus drew a large crowd to town last Saturday [September 2]," according to the Valley Falls *New Era*. "Their menagerie was small and the show was hardly up to the average. They have 15 wagons [menagerie?], but next year will carry 23. The boxing kangaroo disappointed a good many, as they expected it would be a 'grand sight.'"

The date at Eureka on September 4, according to the *Democratic Messenger*, was notable only because, "Some conscienceless thief stole twelve fine turkeys be-

longing to Mrs. Samuel Croft last Monday night. As is usual in such cases people generally blame the theft on the circus men."

The *Eureka Herald* remarked that, "A few say it is a good circus, while a very large number say it is no account."

The *Howard Courant* was incensed by a happening on the show grounds on September 5.

"The big bulldozer who took the tickets at the Lemen Bros. circus ought to have his head smashed with a club. He jumped onto one of our most peaceable citizens, knocked him down and choked him, simply because he misunderstood a remark made by him. No offense was intended, and a man—or brute—who has no more sense than that should not be allowed to occupy such a responsible position. He ought to be put to pounding stakes."

Frank Pullmer of Leavenworth, a young man about 18 years old, quit the circus at Burlington on show day, Monday, September 11, for non-payment of wages. Pullmer attempted to board a moving train, but, according to the *Burlington Independent*, lost his grip and fell beneath the wheels. A leg was severed and he died three hours later from shock and loss of blood.

The *Independent* summed up circus day in a way that all circus goers accept.

"The circus is sneered at by mainly envious managers of rival attractions, affectingly scorned by the languid victims of ennui, and patronized by multitudes. The circus rolls from place to place, scattering smiles and reaping a rich harvest of dollars throughout the length and breadth of the land. The American circus has been termed a diversion. It is more than a diversion, it is an institution. People may talk themselves tired about the decadence of the circus, its puny efforts to ape the palmy days of Barnum and Robinson, and its rapid fall from popular favor, but when 'show day' comes the same crowds will gather, the whole family will be tucked into the farm wagon again, and no hard times can prevent big and little, old and young, from going to see the elephant.

"P. T. Barnum is said to have given a cue to his followers by remarking that the American people like to be humbugged. He didn't mean quite that. If a circus is a humbug, as wise men declare, Barnum might have qualified his statement by saying that his countrymen liked big humbugs, but not little ones. A poor circus is an abomination upon the earth, and stands no possibility of defrauding the same people twice. A good circus can number its years as the leaves of the forest. That's what

the average American thinks, and he is usually right. Long live the typical American circus, with its feats of daring, its whole natural history of strange animals, its innocent amusements, its exhibitions of manly strength and splendid horsemanship! Down with the unworthy, vile and fraudulent rival of this most popular of our national diversions!"

Following the last Kansas date on September 13 in Emporia, the show entered Indian Territory for three dates and then played an extensive tour of Texas, before returning to winter quarters in Argentine, Kansas.

In 1893 Lemen Bros. New Colossal Shows played these Kansas dates: April 28, Argentine, Opened; April 29, Argentine; May 1, Osage City; May 2, Strong City; May 3, El Dorado; May 4, Arkansas City; May 10, Caldwell; May 11, Wellington; May 12, Peabody; May 13, Herington; May 15, Clay Center; May 16, Clyde; May 17, Belleville; May 23, Sabetha; May 24, Horton; May 25, Troy; August 28, Argentine; August 29, Kansas City; August 30, Kansas City; August 31, Leavenworth; September 1, Atchison; September 2, Valley Falls; September 4, Eureka; September 5, Howard; September 6, Cherryvale; September 7, Coffeyville; September 8, Garnett; September 9, Ottawa; September 11, Burlington; September 12, Council Grove; September 13, Emporia; October 7, Argentine, Winter Quarters.

F. J. Taylor of Creston, Iowa, received glowing praise from his home town newspaper, the *Creston Gazette*, for his "Huge World's Museum, Ancient Egyptian Carnival, Royal Menagerie and Great Roman Hippodrome," a show better known in 1893, as F. J. Taylor's America's

F. J. Taylor's Great American Shows, Double Circus, Museum & Menagerie letterhead used in 1893. Pfening Archives.

Greatest Shows. Ahead of show day the Norton *Champion* ran the story from the *Gazette*: "TAYLOR'S EVENING PERFORMANCE.

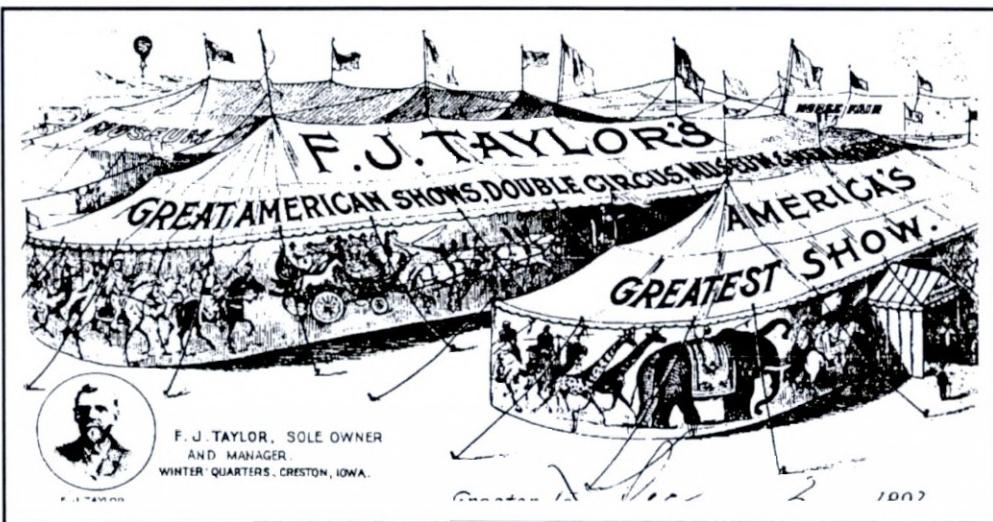
"Saturday was surely Taylor's day in Creston. In the evening the tents of Creston's Showman was crowded to their utmost capacity, as they were in the afternoon and before half those who appeared at the ticket wagon had been supplied the sale of tickets had to be discontinued so great was the jam inside the tents. The people took the situation good natured, however, and after every seat had become occupied hay was spread upon the ground around the ring and men, women and children sat down on it and 'let their feet hang down,' without a murmur.

"The performance was excellent and gave perfect satisfaction to everyone. The riding, tumbling, jumping, trapeze performance, juggling, bare-back riding and all other features of the show were excellent and never was surpassed here before.

"Mr. Taylor has surely got a show that will take with the people.—Creston *Gazette*. At Norton June 3."

The "best cross-country, single ring show" exhibited in Norton on Saturday, June 3, coming from Beaver City, Nebraska. "Jim Stir's, who a year ago left with Taylor's circus, was the first part of the show to arrive at Norton on Saturday morning," according to the *Champion*. "It is only necessary to state that a man is from Norton to convey the further news that he will always be found at the head of the procession."

An ad in the *Champion* modestly described the procession—"THE GRAND FREE STREET PARADE"—as "Crimsoned with the Radiant Lustre of the noonday sun reflecting scenes more grand than king or conqueror ever beheld, tons upon tons, block after block of costly gold and



glitter, a street pageant one mile long, noble knights and ladies fair on prancing horses, huge Camels and Elephants led by their native keepers, hooded horses from Asia, England and Kentucky, open dens of wild and ferocious animals, every nation represented. Bands of music virtually filling the air with melody. A sight worth coming 100 miles to see."

In 1893, the show was, of course, "Larger, Grander, Better Than Ever," with "50 Star Performers!" and "5 Funny Clowns!"

Featured in the ad was Jip and Samson, "the Goliaths of Giant Tribes." Jip, the elephant, was "the largest, costliest and most famous elephant ever seen in a Christian land." Samson was "the most stupendous and stately, the tallest sky towering camel the world ever saw."

"The Only Umbrella-Eared Elephant in Captivity" traveled with Taylor's show.

"A Perilous Trip to the Clouds" was given outside the tent before the performance, but the wire-walker was nameless. "Admission as Usual."

The *Champion* made no mention of the show after the exhibitions.

Norcatur saw the circus on June 5. The *Register* ran a handout that was as modest as Taylor's advertisement.

TAYLOR'S CIRCUS AND MÉNAGERIE. The Only Big Show to Visit This Vicinity This Year.

"Through an arrangement entered into between the proprietors of the leading shows of the country, the great F. J. Taylor shows, which appear in Norcatur, June 5th, will be the only tented exhibition of any importance that will visit this section of the country this year. Already the circus loving portion of this community is on the tiptoe of expectancy over the coming of the old reliable F. J. Taylor aggregation and it can be set down as a certainty that it will attract tremendous crowds. The proprietor of this well known establishment who is the acknowledged leader of the circus business in America, is said to have out done all previous efforts in this line, both in the novelty of the entertainment and in the wonderful features exhibited. The securing of the umbrella-eared elephant, the only one in America, at an enormous outlay of cash, is evidence that the manager of this great show is bound to exhibit to its patrons something new and worthy the great reputation it already has. The street parade will be the grandest ever seen here. After the parade a grand free



F. J. Taylor Circus parade in 1893. Circus World Museum collection.

show will be given on the show grounds, which is said to be the best ever given. We confidently predict enormous crowds on June 5th."

The Norcatur town photographer made "some splendid pictures of the grand street parade."

After the show had come and gone, the *Register* remarked that, "They do say that Taylor's show took in more money this year than it did last."

The third village of Taylor's minuscule tour of Kansas was Oberlin, June 6. The *Oberlin Eye* carried an ad and one handout, but made no comment after the show had left.

Following Oberlin Taylor moved on for exhibitions at McCook, Nebraska on June 7.

The July 29, 1893 *New York Clipper* published "Notes From F. J. Taylor's Circus—We are now in our thirteenth week, and business has been uniformly big since our opening day. On July 13 a cub was born to our lioness, Julia. Our band, under the direction of Prof. Ad. Vrandenburg, is one of the pleasing features of the parade. The principal bareback riding act of Julia Lowande, the hurdle act of Farnum and Welcome are the features of the big show. Lon Moore keeps the audience, as well as the dressing room, in a constant state of merriment. The Stone Bros. are doing a good brother act [Fred Stone became a star of the Broadway theatre]. Alex Lowande's bounding rope act is unique and pleasing. Fred Welcome's balancing trapeze act is very 'taking.' Little Nellie Moore captivates the audience with her evolutions on the silver wire. The Geyers are doing creditable work with their Egyptian juggling and rolling globe acts. The Stone Bros. and Lon Moore are pleasing features of the concert, while Prof.

Vernon is one of the many attractions in the side show. We have had two or three severe wind storms, but, luckily, so far have escaped without losing a foot of canvas or anybody sustaining any injury. The entire dressing room is in a state of pleasant anticipation regarding the return of our equestrian director, Ed. Shipp, which is expected at Silver City July 26, his broken leg having mended sufficiently to sustain his weight once more."

In his autobiography, *Rolling Stone*, Fred Stone presented a charming description of traveling with a mud show.

"The routine of the wagon circus was always the same. If it was moving camp—and with a one night show it was always moving camp—the cook wagon pulled out first, as soon as supper was over. Then, in the evening, when the main show had begun, the side shows were closed, the menagerie pulled down, and one by one the cages started off for the next town.

"The elephant man was usually our trail blazer. He had a little cow pony weighted down with a big cowboy saddle and rode on ahead, leading his elephant. He would find out which road we were to take to the next town and then throw logs across the other one as an indication that we were not go that way. There were not, as a rule, more than two choices.

"We usually traveled all night long. There was a torch on each wagon and night after night, lying half asleep, I watched that line of wagons stretching out across the prairie, each one carrying a flaming torch high above the driver's seat. It was all romantic to me then, and the thought of it still gives me a thrill."

Hobson Brothers' Jr. Great Southern Shows appeared in Grenola on June 7, 1893. Advance agent T. T. Ball billed the town on May 19, and placed an ad with the *Grenola Chief*, for two insertions. "Wednesday, June 7th Afternoon and night, Hobson Bro's. Jr. GREAT SOUTHERN SHOWS.

"In conjunction with Traveno's Grand Circo, Forming a mighty combination. Backed by an immense capital. Inspired by brains and originality, conducted by years of experience. An old fashioned one ring circus. Chaste, Moral, Refined, Elegant, Pleasing, Entertaining, Dazzling, and Truthful. Oceans of spotless fun. The best all including amusement enterprise now before the public. Organized in 1883, our very promise to the public has been

faithfully kept. Expense has not been spared in securing the best performers male and female. The best bare-back riders, leapers, tumblers, acrobats, aerial artists vaulters, divers and plungers. The most accomplished and refined clowns and general performers. The youngest bare-back rider on Earth. Finest and best trained horses, dogs and goats. Smallest and best trained ponies.

"Don't forget the day and place, GRE-NOLA WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7 afternoon and night. Admission 25 and 50 cents."

The spelling, capitalization, punctuation and hyphenation appearing in circus ads is beyond all rules of grammar.

The *Chief* reported that, "Hobson Bros. that has been advertised to show here filled their date Wednesday. The performance was quite meritorious to all concerned and well attended by our people. One commendable characteristic feature was that no gambling was connected with the show. They went from here to Coffeyville."

The Great Southern was scheduled to exhibit "on the lot on 12th St., between Laurel and Myrtle" in Independence on June 8, but the date was blown.

"Hobson Bros., circus which was advertised to exhibit here yesterday was delayed on a slow freight coming from Gre-nola," according to the *Independence Star and Kansan*, "and did not reach here until 6 o'clock last night. And then it did not stop, but pulled right on through for Cherryvale where it laid over last night. It is billed for Coffeyville to-day and tomorrow and will probably succeed in showing there."

Grenola to Independence on the Santa Fe is 45 miles.

Hobson Bros. Jr., did play Coffeyville, showing in Osborn's pasture for two days, June 9 and 10. The *Coffeyville Journal*, following the exhibitions, devoted a few lines to the show.

"Quite a crowd in town Saturday, but trade was not so brisk as appearances would suggest.

The show brought a large number of our Indian friends up from the Territory.

"Fakirs of all sizes, pedigree and complexion were catching suckers on the streets last Saturday.

"If it had not been for the Indians the attendance at the circus would have been rather slim."

One line in the *Journal* presented a mystery. "The Al. Douglas horse did fine at the circus, and received much applause." No explanation was offered.

The *Oswego Independent* reported that, "Hobson Bros. Southern Shows came in Monday from the great unknown and departed into it again after giving a couple of performances to small audiences.

Will Exhibit at Osage Mission THURSDAY, JULY 6

Hobson Bros. Jr., GREAT RAIL-ROAD SHOWS



--- ALLIED WITH ---

Travenio's GREAT Famous Mexican Circus,

AFTERNOON AND NIGHT ----- ADMISSION 25 & 50c.

at Parsons, Kas., July 18, for eight days, with an 80 ft. round top and a 40 ft. middle piece, and did a phenomenal business, which has continued at each stand. We have our own special cars, consisting of one sleeper and dining car combined, one stock and flat car combined. Everything is running smoothly, and the spectre walks every Sunday morning. We play two, four and six day stands. The roster: John Trevino, manager and proprietor; H. C. Long, business manager; T. T. Ball in advance with four assistants; Prof. Sepulveda's band of eight pieces; Otto Geiger, privileges; J. J. White, canvas man, with eight assistants; Ed. Gates, in charge of ring stock with three assistants; Geo. Williams, chandelier man, with two assistants, while Geo. McGill takes care of dressing room to entire satisfaction of all. Performers—Rafel Serta, Francisco Medel, Dionicio Nava, Monico Garcia, Modesta Guterrez, Emeilo Mendez, Lionides Hernandez, Master Isidor Trevino, Francisco Nava, Sig. Trevino, Master Charlie Long and James Orr. Concert—Francisco Trevino, Master Ysidro Trevino, Orr and McGreeney and Master Charlie Long."

In 1893 the Adam Forepaugh Shows began its tour of Kansas with an exhibition at Concordia, Saturday, August 26.

"The only tented exhibition which has been seen in all cities in the United States and Canada that have a population of 50,000 and over are the Adam Forepaugh shows," the management proclaimed. Despite the fact that there were no cities in Kansas of 50,000 and over, the show was not to be curtailed in anyway and the smallest town on the route would see the same extravaganza that was presented in Philadelphia, Chicago and St. Louis.

George H. Robinson, on the advance, called on the June 22 Concordia *Daylight*. A two-column advertisement appeared in the *Daylight* on August 15, the same day advance car No. 2 finished rebilling the town. The great feature of 1893 was "The Birth of Freedom! 1776—The American Revolution."

The glorious pageant required "Acres of Scenery; Thousands of Correct Costumes; All the Arms, Paraphernalia and Accouterments of War and for the Portrayal of the Characters Represented, the entire strength of the Show's Company, nearly 1,000 Men, Women and Children, to properly, realistically reproduce the Battles of Bunker Hill, Concord and Monmouth, Washington Crossing the Delaware; Paul Revere's Ride; the Surrender of Cornwallis; the Tearing Down of the Statue of George III; Washington's Inauguration and others of the great events in the gallant struggle of our valorous forefathers for the priceless boon of the liberty that is ours to enjoy."

This Hobson Bros. newspaper ad appeared in the *Osage Mission Journal* on June 29, 1893. Kansas State Historical Society.

Those who attended say that many features of the show were really meritorious and that they were deserving of better patronage. The fact that Cook & Whitby's gang of thieves operated here some weeks ago so successfully, accounts for the slenderness of their support. The people, 'once bitten,' are 'twice shy.' No thugs, no gamblers travel in the wake of Hobson Bros. show."

An advertisement in the *Osage Mission Journal* [present day St. Paul] announced exhibitions for on July 6, and never mentioned the show again.

"S. M. Sepulveda, cornetist, formerly with the great Mexican (sic) is in the city with Hobson Bros.' show," according to the *Parsons Daily Eclipse*. "Prof. Sepulveda ranks among the best cornetist players (sic) traveling." Parsons was a two day stand, July 7 and 8, Friday and a rainy Saturday. The *Eclipse* noted the presence of a "large number" of farmers in to see the Saturday exhibitions.

The relationship between Hobson Bros. and Trevino's Colossal Mexican Shows may have dissolved before, during or after the Parsons dates of July 7 and 8. Possibly there were never two distinct shows combined. A story in the August 19, 1893 *New York Clipper* adds to the confusion.

"ITEMS FROM TREVINO'S COLOSSAL MEXICAN SHOWS. We opened

It was comforting to know that there would be "NO DANGER to Spectator or Performer. The Battles are Bloodless, the Powder Smokeless. Battle effects, booming of Cannon, etc., produced by Improved Scientific Apparatus."

None of the usual circus features was neglected. There were the "WORLD FAMOUS SEVEN GEROME BROS.—All Earth's Champion Acrobats.

"THE WILD WARRIOR COSSACKS OF THE CZAR—Most Daring, Reckless, Skillful, Rough Riders and Fighters among men. Seen for the first time in America.

"SIXTY-FIVE TRAINED WILD BEASTS—Nothing like them ever seen before. They make all Previous Exhibitions of Trained Animals appear to be the Veriest Child's Play.

"IN THE HIPPODROME many innovations. Races seen for the first time and all Standard Contests of Speed."

For all of this, "Admission, 50 Cents; Children, Under 9 Years, 25 Ct."

All of the above was not enough for the *Daylight*. "THE CIRCUS. A Big Show, But a Poor One.

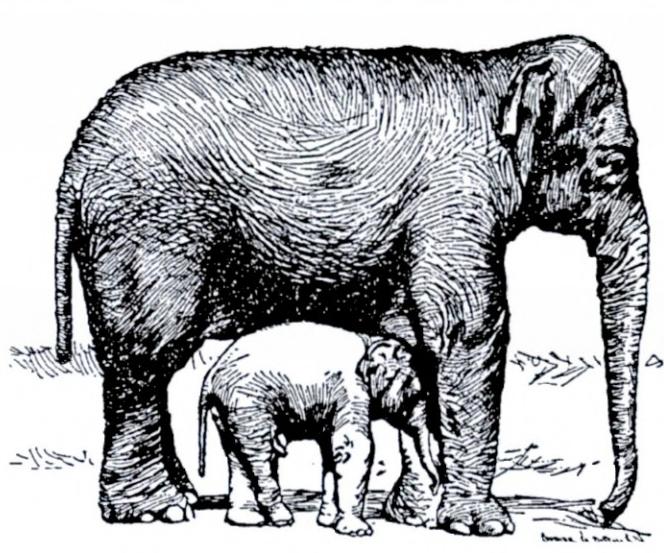
The Forepaugh show that gave one exhibition at Concordia last Saturday did not come up to the expectations of the people, and there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction.

Early in the day the city was filled with people. Every train was loaded with persons from neighboring towns, and the special trains brought crowds.

The parade took place about eleven o'clock, and it was an exceptionally good one, although the general appearance was anything but neat.

The performance in the afternoon was probably given to an audience of about ten thousand people. The scenes from the revolution were good, as far as the scenery was concerned. The grass that formed the stage was also worthy of praise. The ring performance contained many commendable features. The Japanese were very good, as was also a trapeze performer, whose act consisted of balancing on his head in a swing. The riding was very poor, and likewise the races.

The menagerie was a good one, and contained the finest lot of trained elephants ever brought to this city. If the people had known just what the side show contained beforehand the merchants would no doubt had



Elephant Baby Ruth as illustrated in an 1893 Adam Forepaugh courier. Pfening Archives.

an opportunity to dispose of all their stale eggs at a good price.

The worst thing about the entire business was the way in which they robbed people. They would charge full fare for children that should have gone in on half. The men were anything but accommodating and pleasant to deal with. We didn't see the boxing kangaroo, the trotting dog, and many other things that were on the bills. Forepaugh's show is not what it was once."

William Cannon, who brought his family from Clyde to attend the show in Concordia, was not a man to be cheated. Can-

George Washington and Adam Forepaugh were pictured on the front page of an 1893 Forepaugh newspaper courier. Pfening Archives.

non had a son under nine years of age for whom the show charged 50 cents. Cannon appeared before a justice of the peace and got an attachment against the show for the twenty-five cents due him and an additional \$10 for damages. The sheriff took possession of the show. The show preferred to pay the amount of the attachment, plus \$2.50 for constable fees, a total of \$12.75. The *Daylight* took a dim view of the proceedings and commented that, "We do not believe in blackmailing money out of anyone, not even a circus. Mr. Cannon could not have got anything but the twenty-five cents had he gone to law."

All newspaper advertising stated that two performances would be given on the 26th. For an undisclosed reason no evening exhibition was given at Concordia.

The Forepaugh aggregation arrived in Junction City on Sunday for the exhibitions of August 28. After the show had come and gone, the Junction City *Sentinel* expressed a view at variance with that of the Concordia *Daylight*: "THE CIRCUS.

The name of Forepaugh has always had an irresistible ring about it, which has been sufficient to conjure a big crowd at any time, and Monday was no exception to the rule. It is generally agreed that so large a crowd has never before been seen in the city. Circus goers have always expected something out of sight from Forepaugh, and on this occasion they were not disappointed, for, taken altogether, the show was very fine. The Revolutionary tableaux being something entirely new, naturally attracted much attention, and gave great pleasure to the visitors. The various scenes of the Revolutionary war

were given with great effect, although the part of Washington was not as life-like as we were led to expect, yet, taken altogether, the business was well managed and pleased everybody. Some of the performances on the high trapeze were certainly the most wonderful we have ever seen. The gentleman who balanced himself on his head, and while in that position removed the whole of his clothing (sic) and did various other more or less daring feats, has, in our opinion, never been equalled in that line. It would be impossible to enumerate all the interesting features of the mammoth affair, to do so would require half our paper.



Their two days stay here gave us an opportunity to get acquainted with most of the officials connected with the show. We found them all gentlemanly, and obliging. Mr. Dean, the press agent, is an old newspaper man, and a perfect gentleman. So far as we have heard, this is an absolutely clean show, not allowing either crooks or fakirs to remain in its vicinity, and actually going so far as to employ an experienced detective to aid the local authorities. We did not hear of a single case of loss of either money or valuables on the show grounds."

There may not have been any "loss of either money or valuables on the show grounds," but in another column the *Sentinel* reported house robberies while the parade was passing down the streets.

Forepaugh's advance agent, W. C. Boyd, and a paste brigade under the direction of George H. Robinson, were in Topeka July 26, and registered at Allen Sells' Chesterfield Hotel.

On show day, August 29, the show, coming from Junction City, arrived in Topeka in three sections on the Union Pacific. The trains were transferred to the Rock Island and unloaded on the south side of the Kansas river at First and Jackson Streets. A large crowd of curious people were on hand for the unloading.

The parade on "a rare, mellow September day that slipped by accident into August," according to the *Daily Democrat*, was witnessed by a crowd on Kansas Avenue estimated from 15,000 to 20,000.

James Anderson, a former resident of Topeka and manager of Sells Brothers' number two show, Anderson & Company in 1878 and 1879, was assistant manager of the Forepaugh show. C. L. Dean, press agent, who took good care of all Topeka newsmen was formerly head of the drama department of the Kansas City *Journal*.

The Topeka *State Journal* provided its readers with some fashion news.

"The ladies who travel with a circus have reduced the art of traveling to a science. They are the first to use the yoke wrappers which have recently been urged upon the attention of lady travelers recently by dress reformers. This wrapper is a sort of combination robe de unit and a morning house dress, and has the advantage of being comfortable to sleep in, while it avoids the decollete appearance which all women so dread in case of an accident. Some very pretty gowns of this nature were shown to a re-

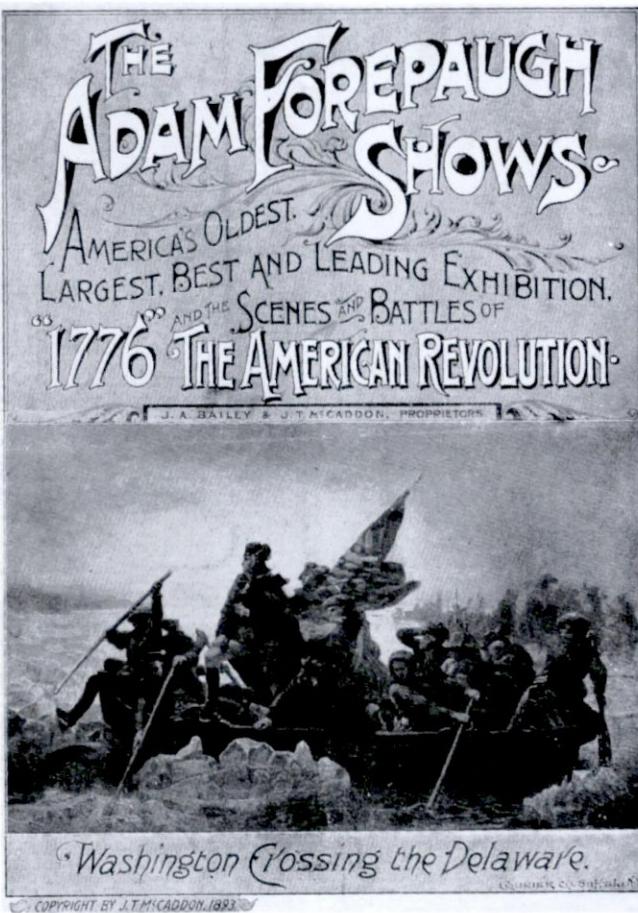
porter for the JOURNAL, who made the sleeping cars a visit this morning.

"Another dress reform idea which was found to have practical demonstration with the Forepaugh shows is the comfortable walking dress, reaching to the knee. This is worn by the Princess Dimitri, the only woman with the Cossacks, who was found upon the show grounds just after the parade had returned. It is the regular costume of her native land, and it sets off her trim figure in a manner to cause all women to envy her. Besides it allows of perfect freedom of movement, and so cultivates that natural grace which all women seek to acquire. The princess wears high top boots with her short skirts, and the most violent opponent of a change in woman's dress could find no suggestion of immodesty in it."

The Topeka *Daily Capital* provided many interesting side-lights of circus day

"The further away you are away from a 'supe' in a circus the more spectacular he becomes. Close proximity kills the effect as it requires an elastic imagination to pass as American revolutionary heroes a small army of young men, with unshaven faces and tobacco-stained lips, who persist in singing, 'Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me

Cover of courier used by the Forepaugh show in 1893. Pfening Archives.



a Bow-Wow' between scenes. But the public can not see all this. They are kept spell-bound by a dazzling change of stirring war pictures.

"It demands a wonderful amount of executive and mechanical ability on the part of Stage Manager August Siegrist, of the great Forepaugh circus, to divide his hundreds of 'supes' so as to produce such really grand American revolutionary scenes and battle displays as were witnessed by the thousands of people who congregated under the great tents on the fair grounds yesterday afternoon and evening.

"Stage Manager Siegrist, who has complete charge, is everywhere at the same moment it seems, and to see the way he maneuvers his numerous squads of 'citizens, patriots, minutemen, etc.,' is to admire the energy and genius of the man. One moment he gets behind a company of English 'red coats,' and fairly pushes them out to battle with a company of American patriots. During the battle he gives orders with lightning rapidity, and throws clods of dirt at soldiers who forget themselves and start in to take a nap in the midst of a hot battle. Everything moves perfectly and there are no tedious waits for men or horses to take their places.

"The majority of these supes are attached in some capacity with the circus, and are paid 25 cents additional every time they appear as 'soldiers' etc., consequently they make \$3 extra every week. There is always one company organized of raw people, picked up in the towns. These must be drilled about one hour before the scenes begin, and it takes a man with the patience of Job to do it. These new men are also paid 25 cents each performance. They have to be watched continually or they are likely to make blunders which throw a ludicrous light over the whole performance. A rattling gun just outside the tent does all the firing, as it would be dangerous to allow a 'supe' to handle anything but a tin gun."

In another story the *Capital* said, "There were about three thousand people at the afternoon performance, according to the ticket takers, though the crowd seemed much larger. All of the ordinary seats were full, and reserved seats were about half taken. The performance was unusually good, a great improvement on the Forepaugh show of two years ago. It began

with a wild beast performance after the style of Hagenbeck's arena at the World's fair. The lions, dogs and leopards see-sawed, fired off cannons, and arranged themselves in pyramids at the will of their trainer, Albert Stadler. This is the first time such a performance has been attempted in a circus tent, and was an interesting innovation.

"Following the animal show came the military and historical display, 'The American Revolution.' The entire end of the big tent was converted into a stage for this spectacle. Seven scenes were shown, beginning with Paul Revere's ride and ending with the inaugural procession of Washington.

"Then came the circus proper. Three rings were kept agoing for over an hour. The little Japanese are always welcome with their acrobatic specialities. The Rosearies and the Donazettas gave good acrobatic performances that were very good if not entirely new and the performing elephants were as good as any ever seen here. The greatest novelty of the show was Irwin whose difficult head balance on the revolving trapeze won much applause. There was a whole regiment of clowns, and the boxing match was really funny.

"The closing feature, as usual, was the racing, and the riding of the six daring Cossacks. Every act was satisfactory, and it is doubtful if better pleased audiences ever poured from a tent than those of yesterday."

The *Journal* observed that, "According to the pictures in the advertisements of Forepaugh's show, George Washington was in the battle of Concord, Bunker Hill, and in all other battles of the Revolutionary war."

The August 25 Marion Record noted that, "Three horseback buglers, who are riding through the country advertising Forepaugh's show [August 30], passed through Marion Wednesday morning."

Burglaries were reported frequently in the towns along the Forepaugh route, but at Marion the thieves struck it rich. During the matinee the E. A. Hodge residence was ransacked and over two thousand dollars cash, a gold watch and other valuables were taken. A suit of clothes was taken from the home Dave Ayers, but was found in an alley the next day.

"We don't believe we ever saw a tougher looking lot of tramps congregate together than accompanied the circus which exhibited here last Wednesday," reported the *Record*, "and they didn't believe their looks either, as some of our citizens who were victims of their pilfering can testify.

"Old Adam Forepaugh would certainly turn over in his grave if he could realize the enormous fake which is traveling



Two sheet Strobridge lithograph used by the Forepaugh show in 1893. Circus World Museum collection.

through the country this season under his name." It was the *Recorder's* parting shot.

The advance buglers, a week before the exhibitions of August 31, made a tour of Hutchinson blowing their horns and scattering hand bills.

The Hutchinson *Daily News* carried a handout about a most unusual feature. "Earl, a trotting dog with an honestly made record of 2:40 on a half-mile track, appears in hippodrome races with the

Adam Forepaugh shows this season. He is open for challenge to trot against any dog and any horse of the same record. American Trotting association rules to govern. He will be here when the shows exhibit on August 31."

A review of circus day in Hutchinson appeared on the day of the exhibitions and was undoubtedly the work of a press agent. One of the parade features mentioned was a thirty-piece marching band led by Prof. George Ganwieler at the head of the procession.

"The opening act is of a character that was considered impossible only a few years ago. Two full grown lions, two panthers, a boar-hound, a mastiff and a bear are placed in the center of the tent and made to do feats that demonstrate in a startling manner the supremacy of man over the animal kingdom. They shoot guns, play see-saw, leap over gates and form pyramids. This group was trained by George Arstingstall, the celebrated chief of menagerie, and is exhibited by Albert Stadler.

"Taking it all in all the great Forepaugh show is something of which Manager McCaddon should feel proud."

A handout in the Arkansas City *Daily Traveler* appearing on show day September 2, claimed, "There are 560 people traveling with the Forepaugh show, and all are fed in a 'cook tent' on the grounds. This traveling hotel employees 52 men, and uses 1,700 pounds of meat and 500 pounds of bread daily, besides other provisions. The stables contain 378 horses, as fine a lot as were ever seen here."

A slack wire presentation, was offered before the matinee.

Burglars raided the residence of J. R. L. Adams, Mrs. Corn, A. Coonrod, Jas. Dovell, S. Matlock and the tailor shop of J. H. Cook. An unsuccessful attempt was made to enter the home of Mayor Newman.

El Dorado saw the Forepaugh show on Monday, September 4.

The El Dorado *Industrial Advocate* reported that, "Chas. W. Rife, the genial press agent of Forepaugh's show was in the city yesterday [August 23], with advertising car number three. Many have the impression that Forepaugh's great show will not come to El Dorado in its entirety. Mr. Rife assures us that the whole show will be here consisting of three special trains of fifty-six cars.

"This show is only second to Barnum's and, in fact, this and the Barnum show are owned by one and the same man, J. A. Bailey."

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Topeka, Kansas.

Mike Martin's

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•DOLL FAMILY-
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Fabulous color film, shot in person, loaded with lot scenes, show equipment and performance hi-lites of many of Europe's biggest names in circus: Chipperfield, Roberts Bros., Willy Hagenbeck, Knie, Krone and more. Also, the complete set-up of a European Style tent & the old Bertram Mills Circus train. 120 MIN. \$29.50 Postpaid

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Ft. Lauderdale, Fl 33331

Fla. Residents add 6% Sales Tax

Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy

A Connecticut magazine recently wrote this about Adam Bardy's book:

"If you're still a kid at heart when the circus comes to town, you'll love Adam Bardy's life story of his adventures of circus life. Adam Bardy was born in Webster on May 21, 1907. Back in 1907 thousands of immigrants from Europe kept coming to America.

"Bardy's life might be compared somewhat to Mark Twain's boyhood heroes Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and back in 1907 in June, Mark Twain met George Bernard Shaw in London. It was a rainy Saturday when the Buffalo Bill Circus came to Webster. Adam Bardy was only 8 years old when he crawled into a circus wagon that night. However on Sunday morning when he crawled out of his hiding place, he wanted to get back home. Bardy had to have a guardian angel as he got back home before he was missed.

"In 1924 Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus played in Worcester. Bardy's interest in the circus was renewed and he got a job with the side show. The circus liked getting young men to join them because it was out of young people that real circus troupers were made.

"Bardy found that circus life in the roaring twenties was rough and tough. On sunny days it was wonderful, but on rainy days you went to bed in the circus cars with wet clothes, and you would have to wait for a sunny day to dry out. If you could put in a full circus season under these conditions, you would be called a real trouper. In the twenties Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey was a railroad circus. It traveled in four sections. The first section was the cookhouse crew along with some circus wagons that carried the cookhouse. The second section carried most of the circus wagons and the stock cars full of work horses and nearly all the working crew. The third section carried the wild animal cages. There were 43 elephants with the circus.

"One of our heroes was Tom Mix and on Saturday afternoon when the local movie theater featured westerns. Tom Mix and his wonder horse Tony was a favorite of young and old movie fans. We recall that Tom Mix was with the Sells Floto Circus and we were invited to attend the circus and see Mix in person in Willimantic. Adam Bardy was working with the Sells-Floto Circus at the time and knew Mix very well. There were more circuses in business in the twenties than there are now. Hagenback and Wallace, John Robinson, Al G. Barnes, Sparks and Walter L. Main were some of the big ones.

"Few folks realized that Tom Mix was at one time a real sheriff, a Deputy U.S. Marshall, a Texas Ranger, a real cow puncher and ranch foreman. He was even Roughrider under Teddy Roosevelt. For Bardy to personally know and work with Mix was one of the truly great thrills of his wonderful life. Mix was one of the truly greats of the silent movies.

"Adam Bardy at the age of 86 can look back at his many adventurous experiences in the circus, life with Gypsies, fortune telling, bootlegging, marriages, and finding love and happiness.

"He has written a book *The Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy*. This book would have made a wonderful movie with enough wholesome family desires of an eight year old "running away" for a day; joining the circus and becoming a boss canvasman and having his crew set up the big circus tent while still a teen-ager. Fortune telling, boxing, bootlegging, and after four score years becoming a successful author. With the right promotional agency, the life and adventures of Adam Bardy could be made into a television series that might parallel the Untouchables and Little House on the Prairie. Many men desire the anonymity of Mister X but Adam Bardy is a real Mr. X . . . Ex-Circus Man, Ex-Pugilist, Ex-Still Operator, Ex-Bootlegger, Ex-Fortune Teller, and an excellent author."

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. For an autographed copy of *Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy*, send check or money order for \$12.95 to:

ADAM BARDY
87 Alm Rd.
Thompson, CT 06277

